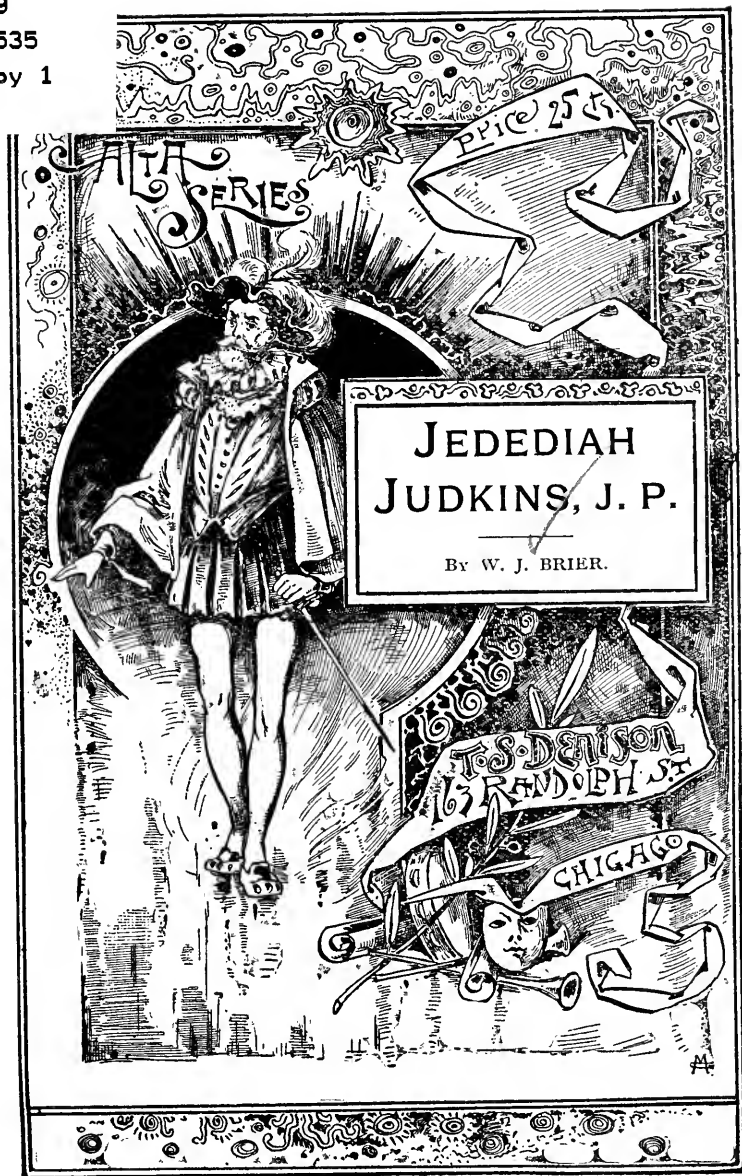


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Family Strike, farce, 20 min.....	8 3	Solon Shingle, comedy, 2 acts, 1 hr. 30 min.....	7 2
Fruits of Wine Cup, Temperance drama, 3 acts, 1 hr.....	6 4	Soldier of Fortune, comedy, 5 acts, 2 hrs. 20 min.....	8 3
Friendly Move, sketch, 20 min....	5 0	Seth Greenback, drama, 4 acts, 1 hr. 15 min.....	7 3
Funnygraph, Ethiopian, 12 min....	6 0	School Ma'am (The), drama, 4 acts, 1 hr. 45 min.....	6 5
Home, comedy, 3 acts, 2 hrs.....	4 3	Stage Struck Darkey, 10 min....	2 1
Handy Andy, Ethiopian, 12 min....	2 0	Stocks Up, Stocks Down, Ethiopian, 8 min.....	2 0
Haunted House, Ethiopian, 8 min..	5 0	Sports on a Lark, Ethiopian, 8 m.	3 0
Homeopathy, farce, 30 min.....	5 3	Sham Doctor, Ethiopian, 15 min..	4 2
Hans Von Smash, farce, 30 min....	4 3	Slasher and Crasher, farce, 1 hr. 15 min.....	5 2
Hard Cider, Temperance, 15 min..	4 2	Squealer's School, sketch, 18 min..	4 2
Initiating a Granger, farce, 25 m.	8 0	Sparkling Cup, Temperance drama, 5 acts, 2 hrs.....	12 4
In the Dark, farce, 25 min.....	4 2	Too Much of a Good Thing, farce, 50 min.....	3 6
In the Wrong House, farce, 30 m.	4 2	Two Gents In Fix, farce, 20 min	2 0
Irish Linen Peddler, farce, 40 min	3 3	Two Puddifoots, farce, 40 min....	3 8
Is the Editor In, farce, 20 min....	4 2	Two Pompeys, Ethiopian, 8 min..	4 0
I'll Stay Awhile, farce, 20 min....	4 0	Tricks, Ethiopian farce, 15 min..	5 2
Ici on Paris Francals, farce, 40 m.	4 3	Ticket of Leave Man, drama, 4 acts, 2 hrs. 45 min.....	8 3
I'm not Meself at All, farce, 25 m.	3 2	Turn Him Out, farce, 50 min....	3 3
John Smith, farce, 30 min.....	5 3	Toodles, drama, 2 acts, 1 hr 15 m.	6 2
Joke on Squinim, Ethiop. 25 min..	4 2	Ten Nights in a Bar Room. Temperance drama, 5 acts, 2 hrs..	11 5
Jumbo Jim, farce, 50 min.....	4 3	Two Ghosts In White, sketch, 25 m	0 8
Kansas Immigrants, farce, 30 m..	5 1	Under the Laurels, drama, 5 acts, 1 hr. 45 min.....	5 4
Kiss in the Dark, farce, 30 min....	2 3	Unhappy Pair, Ethiopian, 10 min.	8 0
Louva the Pauper, drama, 5 acts, 1 hr. 45 min.....	9 4	Uncle Jeff, Ethiopian farce, 25 m.	5 2
Larkins' Love Letters, farce, 50 m.	3 2	Wanted a Correspondent, farce, 2 acts, 1 hr.....	4 4
Lady of Lyons, drama, 5 acts, 2 hrs. 30 min.....	8 4	Wide Enough for Two, farce 50m.	5 2
Limerick Boy, farce, 30 min.....	5 2	Which will be Marry, farce, 30 m.	2 8
Lost in London, drama, 3 acts, 1 hr. 45 min.....	6 3	Won at Last, comedy, 3 acts, 1 hr. 45 min.....	7 3
London Assurance, comedy, 5 acts, 2 hrs. 30 min.....	9 3	Women of Lowenburg, Historical Sketch, 5 scenes. 50 min....	10 10
Lucy's Old Man, sketch, 15 min..	2 3	Yankee Detective, drama, 3 acts, 2 hrs.....	8 3
Michael Erle, drama, 2 acts, 1 hr. 30 min.....	8 3		
Mike Donovan's Courtship, comedy, 2 acts, 15 min.....	1 3		
Movement Cure, farce, 15 min....	5 0		
Mrs. Gamp's Tea, sketch, 15 min.	0 2		
Mischievous Nigger, farce, 20 min..	4 2		
My Wife's Relations, comedy, 1 hr	4 6		
My Jeremiah, farce, 20 min.....	3 2		
My Turn Next, farce, 50 min.....	4 3		
My Neighbor's Wife, farce, 45 m.	3 3		

T. S. DENISON, Publisher, 163 Randolph St., Chicago.

JEDEDIAH JUDKINS, J. P.

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

BY

✓
WARREN J. BRIER,

AUTHOR OF "A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE," ETC.

34



CHICAGO:

T. S. DENISON, PUBLISHER.

163 RANDOLPH STREET.

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CHARACTERS.

JEDEDIAH J. JUDKINS, Justice of the Peace.

JOHN CRAINCROSS, a Tradesman.

HERBERT CRAINCROSS, JOHN'S Son, an Engraver.

REGINALD WINDUM, Senior Partner in the Firm of Windum & Tick, Jewelers.

GEORGE PRENTISS, a Detective.

HORATIO DE CAMP, a Crook.

BUCK HARDIN, the Other One of the Pair.

A POLICEMAN.

AN OFFICER at Police Station.

MRS. CRAINCROSS, John's Wife.

BERNICE CRAINCROSS, the Daughter.

ESTHER GOLDFAIR, John's Ward.

MISS BOBBIN, Nobody Knows What.

SALLY SANDS, a Silly Servant to the Craincrosses.

[May be conveniently performed by eight or ten persons.]

COSTUMES.

AGES.—JED., 55. JOHN, 50. HERB., 25. WINDUM, 40. PRENTISS, 25. DE C., 20. HARDIN, 25. MRS. C., 45. BER., 20. ESTHER, 18. Miss B., 35. SALLY, 25.

[Much of the dress is that of city people in moderate circumstances.]

JEDEDIAH, a substantial farmer suit, somewhat bald, iron-gray wig, long gray chin whiskers. In last scene more dressy, white high hat, etc. In miner cabin scene, greasy brown duck overalls and hunting shirt.

WINDUM, very well dressed, silk hat, abundance of jewelry.

PRENTISS, plainly dressed as a book agent; over-dressed as an English swell; red wig and beard as an Irishman.

MISS BOBBIN, overdressed.

SALLY, as a servant.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means the actor's right as he faces the audience. L., left. C., center R. C., right of center. L. C., left of center. D. F., door in flat, running across stage at back. 1 E., first entrance. 2 E., second entrance. U. E. upper entrance. 1, 2, or 3 G., first, second or third groove.

NOTES.

If a stuffed parrot cannot be obtained, one can be made of brilliantly colored cloth.

Shooting the bottle out of the hand can be so skillfully done that the audience may be deceived into thinking a bullet is really fired. Take a bottle of colored glass (so no liquid need be used) of proper size and shape, and with a diamond or glass cutter cut off the long neck, being careful to break no pieces from the edges. Fasten with plaster Paris a stick a little longer than the bottle into the bottom, and let it pass up through the neck, making it fit so tightly that it will hold the two pieces together. The instant the shot is fired at the bottle, the bottom part is pushed off by the thumb of the person holding it, and falls to the floor. A lamp chimney shattered behind the scene at the time gives the necessary crash. In short, there is nothing in this play that cannot be easily presented by any stage manager possessed of a little ingenuity.

Time of representation, about two hours.

ACTS AND SCENES.

ACT I. The Home of John Craincross.

ACT II. The same.

ACT III. *Scene 1.* A street in the city at daylight. [May be omitted.]

Scene 2. Police station.

Scene 3. Same as Act I.

ACT IV. [Eighteen months after preceding.]

Scene 1. Miner's Cabin in Mountains.

Scene 2. Same as Act I.

SYNOPSIS FOR PROGRAMME.

ACT I. Jedediah, a Hoosier farmer, comes to the city as a delegate to a convention. Takes up his abode with the Craincrosses. News of the robbery of Windum & Tick's jewelry store. Herbert, the engraver, suspected. DeCamp gets the lay of the land, and Hardin visits the house of the Craincrosses uninvited. The American eagle meets the British lion.

ACT II. Prentiss, as a book agent, displays some skill in the use of the English language. Jedediah signs a doubtful petition. Herbert arrested for forgery and burglary. "'Tis a foul conspiracy I am innocent."

ACT III. In the police station. Two upon one, and he handcuffed. Jedediah, in spite of his position, lends a hand. "The keeper shot? A new accusation against me! I cannot face it." A scene in the home of the Craincrosses wherein several individuals talk, including Windum and the parrot.

ACT. IV. In a miner's cabin. Familiar characters in unfamiliar dress. Crackey makes a crack shot. "The Redskins! The Redskins!" "I'm done for! I must see him before I die!" At the home of the Craincrosses. The return. Happy termination.

Every amateur actor would do well to read and be guided by M. Coquelin's hints concerning the use of the eye, and the evil results of allowing one's look to become "inexpressive, wandering, disinterested in what is being said or done" on the stage. See "Acting and Actors," *Harper's Magazine*, April, 1888.

JEDEDIAH JUDKINS, J. P.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Sitting room in home of John Craincross. Table near C. with newspaper upon it. Sofa or settee R. Rocker L. Chairs R. and L. of center table. Sewing machine at back. Door in flat. Gas jet or imitation at back. Esther partly facing audience, running machine, and Mrs. Craincross in rocker when curtain rises.*

ESTHER. (*Stopping machine.*) Did you notice anything strange in Herbert's conduct this morning, Mrs. Craincross?

MRS. CRAINCROSS. (*Startled.*) Yes, I did. (*Looking over glasses.*) It has haunted me all day. I have tried to make myself think it a foolish fancy. Your question confirms my impression.

ESTHER. When I asked him to pass the bread he gave me the salt; put pepper in his coffee and sugar on his potato, and on the whole acted very strangely.

MRS. C. I can't account for it. (*Sighing.*) I never saw him in such a state before.

ESTHER. He usually gives such perfect attention to every detail.

MRS. C. And is never at all absent minded.

ESTHER. Could anything have gone wrong at the store?

MRS. C. It's not likely. Nothing could shake Windum & Tick's confidence in him. [*Pronounce Windum with long sound of i.*] (*Sighs. Both look greatly troubled.*)

ENTER JOHN D. F.

JOHN. (*In good spirits.*) Ay-day! Wot's the matter 'ere? (*Looking from one to the other.*) Ye're lookin' as solemn as two howls. 'As the hoven got too 'ot and burnt the bread, or 'ave ye broke a needle or dropped a stitch? (*Sits at table and takes up the paper.*) Ye women do so give yersels hup to 'untin' fer camels o' trouble an then chasen 'em through a needle's hi o' consolation. (*Reads paper.*)

MRS. C. We hope we'll not be able to find any great trouble if we *do* hunt for it. Trouble enough will come to us if we let it alone.

JOHN. (*Springing to his feet.*) Wife, 'av ye seen the paper?

MRS. C. (*Alarmed.*) What's the matter, John? You're as pale as a ghost.

ESTHER. (*Coming quickly down.*) What is it, Guardy? (*JOHN hands paper to ESTHER and points to heading. ESTHER reads.*) "Bold burglary! Windum & Tick, jewelers, relieved of \$10,000 worth of valuables. Their check forged in the amount of \$5,000 and cashed at Merchants' Mutual Exchange Bank! Perfect imitation of their signatures! Suspicion points toward their engraver." (*JOHN sinks into chair.*)

MRS. C. Not our Herbert! Nct our honest boy! (*Sits on sofa overcome with grief.*)

JOHN. (*Growing cooler.*) Hit must mean 'Erbert, but hit's a lie, a cruel malicious lie from hend to hend. The heditors of that paper must take hit back or hi'll cram hit down their libelous maws. Hi'll make 'em heat the 'ole hedition.

ESTHER. (*Standing behind him and smoothing his hair.*) There, there, Guardy, don't allow yourself to be so much excited. No doubt it's all a mistake. It will all come out right, never fear.

MRS. C. My poor boy, my poor boy.

JOHN. 'E's the soul of honor, hand would sooner 'ave 'is and cut hoff than to knock down a penny, to say nothing hof forgin' people's names.

MRS. C. I'm going to find my boy and tell him of this horrible accusation. It will be a cruel blow to him, but he should know it at once.

JOHN. Never fear, wife. 'E'll know hit soon enough. Never wags a hidle gossipin' tongue or falls a scandalous word habout ye but some kind, hidiotic friend bears hit to ye hand plays hit in yer hears with hextrahordinary variations.

ESTHER. That's true, Mr. Craincross. Besides, he probably knows it by this time. (*Goes up and sits at machine.*)

ENTER SALLY, *L. 2 E., followed by* JEDEDIAH JUDKINS *carpet bag in each hand, umbrella under one arm and cane under other. Very warm from walking. Behind him* HORATIO DE CAMP *with wheelbarrow, on which is a very large trunk. (If no trunk large enough can be found, make one of a dry goods box.)*

SALLY. Here's a gentleman caller wot has come to call on yu. (*Titters, makes a courtesy and backs off R.*)

MRS. C. Why, brother Jed. as I live. How you have surprised us.

JED. Howdy! Howdy! How are all? (*Business of hand shaking with JOHN, kissing MRS. C., and usual salutations.*) Laws! How sorter solemn ye look! Anybody dead in the house? (*DE C. lifts trunk off wheelbarrow, and stands it on end.*)

MRS. C. No, oh no.

JED. (*Seeing position of trunk, to DE C.*) Gewhillicky, man, that'll never do. Never leave a trunk of mine standin' on end. They aint made to stand so. (*To others.*) One of them reckless varmints on the keers stood it up thataway, but I got so hoppin' mad that he dropped it. I 'low young man you'll have to pay me about twenty-seven cents damages. (*Winking at JOHN.*)

DE C. Not much ye bloomin' duffer, specialiy when ye warn't to give but twenty-five cents fer the whole job.

JED. Then you'll owe me two cents—call it five to make even change. I ort ter fine ye four bits fer bein' so onrespectful to one in my position.

DE C. (*Appealing to JOHN.*) Hear that, guvner. Talk about tight as the bark on a tree ; bark on a tree is way off as compared with a duffer as is as close as this un. Come now, fork over, or I'll yell fer the copper.

JED. None of yer sass. Ye wont hef ter yell fer the brass, if ye do yell fer the copper. Yankin' people's trunks round in that style and standin' 'em on end ! Trunks of people in my position, too, Justice of the Peace. What might yer name be, young man ?

DE C. It might be His Excellency, John L. Sullivan, K. D. G. W. M., knock down the gillies with his mouth, but it aint, it's just plain Gustavus Orlando Horatio De Camp. (*Aside.*) Wonder if he'll strangle on that !

JED. Laws ! Ye don't say so ! (*Slowly.*) Was ye born with it er—er did it kinder come on ye by degrees ? Be keerful not ter drap it, ye might get it tangled round yer feet, tumble down and break yer neck. (*Thrusting hand deep into pocket and bringing out a handful of coin.*) Laws, I haint no spirits ter beat down the charges of an unfortunit feller who has ter be indicted by sich a name as thet. Mine's bad enough. Here's yer money. Horatio, decamp.

DE C. (*Takes money.*) Ta, ta, Hayseed. Put yer precious trunk in a safe over night. Some calf might break into the house and chew the handles offen it.

JED. I think I jest now heerd him blat. (*DE C. gives trunk a vicious kick and exits hastily D. F.*)

ESTHER. (*Coming down.*) I presume you don't know me, Mr. Judkins, but I once visited you at your home in Posey.

JED. (*Shaking her hand heartily.*) I'll be jiggered if it aint John's ward, little Esther Goldfair ! I'm tickled ter death ter see yer. How yer have growed ! Blossomed right out like a mornin'-glory in a pertater patch. Aint married yit ? (*ESTHER*

shakes her head emphatically.) Wall, wall, they haint got no eye fer beauty in these diggin's, no how. Come down to Posey an the boys will gather round yer thicker'n bumble bees in a clover lot.

MRS. C. Esther doesn't trouble herself much about the men, Jedediah. She's a quiet home body.

ESTHER. I don't have time for them, you know.

JED. (*Slily.*) Some day ye'll hev gobs uv time fer 'em.

JOHN. They hall av time enough wen the right man 'appens round ; but so far Hester 'as hignored the men. But bless me, Jedediah, 'ow did you 'appen to leave the farm and come to the city ?

JED. (*Proudly.*) Delegate, delegate from Posey.

MRS. C. Delegate to what ?

JED. Ter the anty-Mormon convention. Lor, ye've heerd uv it uv course. Haint ye bin called upon ter board none uv the delegates ?

MRS. C. (*Smiling.*) No, Jedediah, we haven't heard of it and haven't been asked to board the delegates. That isn't one of the city ways.

JED. You don't say so ! Wonder how the delegates gits along if they haint no relatives in the city. There's ter be a powerful sight uv 'em here.

ESTHER. I presume they go to the hotels.

JED. Laws but that ud cost 'em a heap of money. Like enough hef ter pay six bits a day at a good hotel.

JOHN. (*Smiling.*) They pay has 'igh has five dollars a day hat the Palmer.

JED. (*Gasping and clutching his pocket.*) Oh Lord ! oh Lord ! What air ye comin' to ? But I 'low that's fer only the upper rooms and only the Cræsuses feels able ter take 'em.

JOHN. (*Chuckling.*) Hupper rooms ! Well, Jedediah, hi'll 'ave to show you some hov the hups and downs hov city life before you go back to Posey. But didn't hit seem strange ter leave your 'umble 'ome and take the cars for the great city ?

JED. Lor no. I jest stepped onto the keers as big as life and never said a word ter nobody, more'n as if I had rid on 'em a thousand times. Didn't bob out but once afore they started, nuther. That war when I see a feller wheelin' my trunk right along past the keer I was in. When I yelled at 'im and told 'im ter heave it on whar I was, a feller standin' by told me thar was another keer fer the luggage. I told 'im he might call me as many names as he liked, and I wouldn't whollip him, fer I was a justice of the peace. Howsumdever, I give 'im ter understand I'd prevent that feller from runnin' off with my trunk. He arterward explained what he meant, an' I offered 'im a chaw of terbacker.

ESTHER. They don't travel in the manner they did when you were young.

JED. Lor no, these keers an' telegraphs an' sich has made people powerful extravegant. A young feller came a rippin' through the keers givin' out right an' left two or three walnut meats, jest as if he was conferrin' a great favor. "Wot's the damage?" sez I. "Nothink," sez he. "You're a philanther-pist," sez I. "You're another," sez he, real mad like, and passed on.

JOHN. Did hit to wet your happetite.

JED. It didn't work. When he tried arterwards ter git fifteen cents oughten me fer a thimble full uv 'em, I riz right up and sez I, "Wot ye take me fer? I don't own no teler-phone plant, no not even a modest gold mine," sez I. "I aint Jay Gould," sez I, "I'm Jedediah Jackson Judkins from Posey, goin' inter the city as a delegate, an' ter visit my sister, Mary Jane." "You're a daisy," sez he, an' left me.

JOHN. Hin Hengland they don't hallow himpertinence hin public hofficers.

JED. 'Nother stravigant feller got blame mad cause I wanted ter go snucks with him in buyin' a daily paper.

ESTHER. Was the ride agreeable?

JED. Would a bin ef it hadn't bin fer a sick ooman on the train. Dyin' uv consumption.

MRS. C. How I pity any one who has to travel while sick !
(*Exits R.*)

JOHN. Comin' hinto the city to try to get elp, mayap.

JED. She needed it in more ways than one. Pore as Job's turkey, in flesh an' purse. Et the lunch an ornery old coot bought fer her as if she hadn't had nothink ter eat since the war. I seen the old fool slip ten dollars inter her hand, an' then she broke down entirely.

ESTHER. Noble man ! Who was he ?

JED. I didn't go through the keers askin' folks thar names. They'd uv thought I'd never traveled.

ESTHER. Thou art the man !

JED. Oh shucks ! I don't make money fast enough fer that. '

JOHN. Hi can see hit hin yer hi. (*Re-enter MRS. C. remaining up.*)

JED. Lor, lor, how peart you city folks do grow. They's no denyin' I hev been full uv sympathy fer the pore thing all day, but I haint so full uv sympathy that thar's no room left fer supper.

MRS. C. I've been waiting to get in a word edgewise.

JED. Ef the word's supper, Mary Jane, now's yer time.

MRS. C. The word *is* supper. Walk right out this way.

JOHN. You'll hexcuse me, Jedediah. Hi hate my supper down town.

JED. Well, I'll be jiggered ef I *hate my supper* either down town or up town. (*Exits R. with MRS. C. after hastily inspecting his trunk to learn that it is not injured.*)

JOHN. Strange man, that Jedediah. !

ESTHER. A rough diamond, I think.

ENTER L. MISS BOBBIN. *Talks very rapidly, in a high key.*

BOB. Have you heard the news ? I've just been over to Mrs. Bings' where a few of us were having a quiet chat, and they say that the firm of Windum & Tick has been robbed by

one of the clerks, who forged a check on the bank. I don't pretend to know how much truth there is in it, but that is what they say.

JOHN. (*Sharply.*) Madam, 'ell aint 'ot enough for them as goes about dammin' honest names hunder the dirty, rotten cloak of "They Say."

BOB. I think so, too, and if everybody would be careful, as I said to them they ought to be, not to repeat it as it would be dreadful for Mrs. Tick in case it turned out a false rumor.

EST. (*Astonished.*) Mrs. Tick!

BOB. Yes, they say she has eloped with the clerk who burglarized the store.

JOHN. Heloped! Holy brother of Haron! She's been dead five years.

BOB. You don't say so! Well, then, it must have been Mrs. Windum.

JOHN. Worse yet. There never was any Mrs. Windum. Windum's han hold bach. (*Bob. holds up her hands in astonishment.*)

ESTHER. (*Aside to JOHN.*) Perhaps it's all as false as this part of it.

JOHN. Ho Lord, hif hit honly his hi'll be 'appy!

BOB. I'm sorry for Mr. Windum. I haven't the pleasure of his acquaintance, but I know he must be a good man he bows his head so devoutly when he enters the church; besides he is so friendly to our clergyman since his troubles began.

JOHN. Whose troubles?

BOB. Mr. Babcock, the clergyman's, of course. Haven't you heard the sensation, about how that young and indiscreet wife of his—

JOHN. No, I 'aven't 'eard (*pronounce urd*) and you'll hex-cuse me if hi say that I don't want to 'ear. (*Aside.*) Hov hall the crimes hin the calendar the crime hov bein' young his the most houtrageous to them has haint so young. (*Footsteps outside*)

ESTHER. Herbert is coming, Mr. Craincross. I hear his step on the walk. (JOHN *walks about nervously.*)

BOB. (*Aside.*) Now why should she know his step? Setting her cap for him, I'll warrant. How silly these girls are! I actually knew one of the little idiots to become infatuated with the chunk of wood to which her boat was fastened simply because it's called a buoy (*boy*). (*Exit with nose in air.*)

ENTER HERBERT *D. F.*

HERBERT. Why, Esther dear, how pale you look. Has anything unpleasant happened? (*Takes one of her hands in both of his, comes down to C. and stands between her and JOHN.*)

ESTHER. No, not to us.

JOHN. (*Fondly and anxiously.*) Hare you hall right, 'Erbert?

HERB. (*Laughing.*) Certainly, father; why shouldn't I be? Don't I look all right?

JOHN. You look 'arty enough.

HERB. I'm hearty and hungry both. I've been on the road out of town all day and didn't get any dinner.

JOHN. (*Aside.*) Then 'e 'asn't 'eard.

ESTHER. Come right out to tea. (*Both exit R.*)

HARDIN *puts head in D. F. as JOHN follows them out.*

JOHN. (*As he exits.*) 'Ow shall we tell 'im, seein' 'e 'asn't 'eard.

HARDIN. (*Mocking.*) 'E 'asn't 'eard, eh? Well, I hope I'll not be 'eard; but this is a ticklish job. Wonder if the old cove keeps his swag in this box. If De Camp has fooled me I'll smash his smeller. (*Takes out keys, opens trunk and pulls over the few articles it contains. SALLY'S loud laugh heard. HARDIN jumps into trunk and pulls down lid.*)

ENTER SALLY *R. still laughing. Takes seat on trunk.*

SALLY. He, he, he, the funny old chicken! Chucked me right under the chin when he sot at table. Ha, ha, ha, he, he,

he, ho, ho, ho. (*Chews gum vigorously, then takes it out and stretches it.*) This is the sweetest gum I ever chawed. But if I'm to be a actress I must act. How glad I'll be when I go on the stage. (*Drops on her knees down L. Trunk lid slightly lifted.*)

HARDIN. (*Aside.*) She might get a job on the stage to scrub it.

SALLY. (*Tragically.*) "Me Lawd, have pity! I'm but a poor defenceless geurl!"

HARDIN. (*Aside.*) Her looks are her safeguard.

SALLY. "This hand is pledged to another."

HARDIN. (*Aside.*) Name must be Fish, or he wouldn't want such a fin as that.

SALLY. "I am his, heart, body and soul."

HARDIN. (*Aside.*) And gum.

SALLY. (*Jumping up, the trunk lid closing.*) I snum, somebody said (*Very loudly*) gum. (*Goes cautiously to trunk and listens. Seems alarmed.*) Oh, my! wonder if the tender old chicken haint got a calf in there. Mebby it's ghosts. (*Clatters off L. HARDIN sticks out his head.*)

HARDIN. Guess this is my time (*sees ESTHER coming at R.*) to lay low. (*Drops lid, but lifts it occasionally during the following.*)

ESTHER ENTERS R.

ESTHER. He's so cheerful and seems so happy, I'm sure he knows nothing of what the papers contain. But why need I be so worried about it? He'll prove his innocence in case any accusation is made.

ENTER HERBERT R.

HERBERT. One word with you, Esther, before the others come in. Why do you not confide in me and tell me the cause of this trouble?

ESTHER. (*Gently but firmly.*) Not to-night, Herbert, not to-night. Perhaps to-morrow I may be able to look upon it as the evanescence of a dream.

HERB. You know it is for the best or you would not hesitate to give me your entire confidence. I trust you fully. I only thought the trouble might be halved by sharing it.

ESTHER. On the contrary, it would be doubled.

ENTER JED *R. unseen by them.*

JED. (*Aside.*) In love! I'll bet a hoss. (*Direct.*) Ahem! Ahem! (*HERBERT and ESTHER suddenly find business at opposite sides of the room.*)

ESTHER. Oh, is that you, Mr. Judkins? Herbert, don't you know your own uncle?

HERB. I didn't recognize him at first. (*They shake hands.*)

JED. An' is this little Herby? Laws, but you've growed too! Wern't knee high to a saw hoss when you was down to Posey. I 'low yer don't remember it, but yer had gobs of fun down thar.

HERB. Oh, yes; I remember it well.

MRS. C. (*Who has entered at R.*) Come, Herbert, or your supper will not be worth the eating.

HERB. Coming, mother. (*To JED.*) Excuse me a few moments. (*Exit R.*)

JED. Fine young feller. Little bit on the wire edge as a feller is apt ter be when he's head over heels in love with a good lookin' gal.

ESTHER. Why, Mr. Judkins! How can you?

JED. Oh, I can. Tell it at sight every time same as eresipelas. It's about the same wherever you find it. But laws! it's nothink ter be ashamed uv. Perfectly nateral. Nateral as the spontaneous gush o' nateral gas. No use ter try ter smawther it. It won't be smawthered.

ESTHER. Well, I don't know that I try to smother it. Why should I? I've lived under the same roof with Herbert for four years, ever since my father died, and I know him to be noble and good, a manly man of whose love any girl might feel proud.

JED. Hooray! It gushes spontaneously. Let it gush! No corks nor stoppers need apply. What says the rhymster?

When Cupid draws his silent bow,
 Ter pierce the heart of lad and lass,
 When love's bright flame begins ter glow
 So bright they do not need the gas,
 When at the mention of his name
 Her modest cheek begins ter blush,
 When two begin this gushin' game,
 Take my advice—jest let 'em gush.

A city feller that came ter my place writ that in one arternoon fer me ter recite at a spellin' school, the time the tornader visited us. Tell ye, it brought down the house!

ESTHER. The recitation?

JED. Naw! The tornader.

ENTER MISS BOBBIN L.

ESTHER. Miss Bobbin, allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. Judkins from Posey.

JED. I hope I see you well, madam.

BOB. Oh, very well, thank you. I'm one of those fortunate people who are always well.

JED. So am I. Regular doctor starver, I am. I'm that healthy that the life insurance agents run arter me like a flock o' turkeys arter a grasshopper. I'm so loaded down with health that I'm afeard it'll be the death o' me. Lay it all ter grantin' a divorce betwixt my well and my hog pens.

BOB. Your first visit to the city, Mr. Judkins? (ESTHER *exit R.*)

JED. Wal, yes, ter this city. Howsumdever, I've been a heap o' times ter Poseyville and mingled in the sersiety o' the county jedge, an' the sheriff, an' the coroner, but I aint stuck up about it. I'm a justice of the peace. Right smart place, Poseyville.

BOB. Much style there?

JED. Style? You bet a hoss! They hev picket fences round thar dooryards, leastways next ter the big road, blinds on thar winders, a cupelow on thar town hall, an aristocratic green scum on thar millpond, and a mortgage on the church. Style! Laws, yer orter see 'em take up the collection. They aint a tonier performance nowhar than that o' Deacon Smithers an' Deacon Blifkin passin' the corn poppers 'round under people's noses. Till they got the poppers I allers let 'em have my hat, *free*.

BOB. (*Gushingly*.) It must be perfectly too delightful out there in the country drinking in the pure air—

JED. (*Smiling blandly*.) Uh, huh! (*The common inelegant way of giving assent instead of saying "Yes."*)

BOB. And listening entranced to the feathered songsters warbling their delightful airs. One could roll in the delights of Nature, so to speak.

JED. Many on 'em drink in suthin' stronger'n pure air, and as to the wobblin', most on it is done by featherless critters who hev imbibed too much tanglefoot. So far as rollin' in the delights uv natur are consarned, most on 'em don't roll that way.

BOB. I suppose you have a large and valuable farm down there.

JED. (*Aside*.) I'll be dog on ef I don't believe she's up ter some gum game or another. (*Direct*.) Wal, yes, Miss, I've got a heap o' land and raise a power o' corn an' hogs. Interested in corn an' hogs, Miss?

BOB. Oh, yes, indeed. I'm interested in everything that develops our vast natural resources and helps to elevate us as a people.

JED. I der know as hog raisin' is specially elevatin', but corn juice sometimes is.

BOB. I'm a philanthropist and a Christian Scientist, Mr. Judkins. I labor to elevate—in the best sense of that term—my fellow men.

JED. (*Aside.*) Feller men! I thought she was a ooman.

BOB. The world is ignorant, and man is depraved. A chosen band of us are laboring to distil into men's intellectualities the ethereal essence of ultimate and indisputable truth. The mind is everything, the body nothing. One experiences pain only in the imagination.

JED. Gewhitteky crickets! Ye don't say so!

BOB. Yes, and more than that. (JED *slily pinches her arm.*) Ouch! you horrid man! What do you mean by insulting an undesigning and defenceless woman?

JED. Laws, Miss, I didn't think ye'd feel it. Didn't know yer imagination was in yer elbow. I humbly beg pardon.

BOB. Granted. But sir, I wanted to ask about the attitude of your people concerning birds.

JED. Birds? I don't seem able ter chaw yer fodder.

BOB. What, sir?

JED. I don't seem ter jig ter yer music.

BOB. Jig to my music! I haven't been making any music.

JED. Chin music, ye know. You ask about birds. Now, ef ye mean turkeys, I 'low my neighbors and myself favors 'em. Ef ye mean the goose, I reckon she hangs high. Ef ye mean the crow, I kin eat crow, but I don't hanker arter it. Ef ye mean the great American eagle, I'll bet a hoss he's got the sinew to tar the eyes outen the British lion, an' pull off his mane ter make a duster ter sweep the cobwebs from the sky of this great *e pluribus unum, rara avis*, no hash in the *menu*. *W'hoop!*

BOB. Mercy! How very enthusiastic you are, Mr. Judkins. You're just the person I've been wanting to talk with. You didn't understand me. My meaning is this: In many parts of the country, birds, pretty, harmless songsters, are being ruthlessly destroyed by cruel sportsmen, with impunity—

JED. And a shotgun.

BOB. Yes, and we are making petitions to the legislatures to pass stringent laws to stop this needless slaughter. Think

it over, kind sir, and perhaps you will be willing to lend your name and influence to suppress such an infamous practice.

JED. Wall, I'll think it over. I haint got nothin' agin the birds, nohow.

BOB. Thank you. I know your kind heart will prompt you to aid us. Good-night.

JED. Good-night, madam. (*Exit MISS B. JED sits facing audience. Holds head first on one side, and then on the other. Squints first one eye and then the other. Throws left leg over right, then right over left, in quick succession, and finally bursts into a loud laugh.*)

JED. "Kind heart," how cute! "Prompt yer ter aid us!" Oh, Lor! (*Spelling.*) S-a-f-t, saft, s-o-d, sod, d-e-r der, saft sodder. Wot on yarth's the game? (*Bounds from his chair, and claps hand to his head.*) That ideer struck hard. It's matrimony. (*Collapses into chair.*) That can't be. She don't know I'm a widderer. Religion? Hardly, unless she thinks me a heathen as would pay well fer the privilege of being Christianized. Confidence? Wall, I'll keep my eye on her. Ef I *am* green I low it aint the green scum o' stagnation. I low it's because I'm so young I aint had no time ter ripen. Haw! Haw!

ENTER JOHN R.

JOHN. Wot, hall halone? Hi thought the women folks were ere.

JED. They was one of em here. Miss Bobbin by name. High strung, eh, John?

JOHN. Hi think she may be a little that way. She haint been 'ere but a short time, hand we don't know 'er gait.

JED. When ye find it out old man, ye'll find she'll beat the record. Way down ter two minits or I'm a sap bucket. What's her occupation?

JOHN. She's some missionary society hagent Mary Jane picked hup to one hof 'er meetin's, an' hi guess she sorter fell hin love with Mary Jane, hevery body does ye know, she's so

good an' kind like, hand we took 'er to board ha spell. But hit's late hand you're tired, so hi'll show ye to bed. (*Motioning off R. U. E.*) Right hup them stairs. (JED. *exits R.* Enter HERB. *at D. F.*) 'Ere, 'Erbert, lend ha 'and hat this trunk. (*They carry trunk off R.*) 'Oly brother hov Haron, aint hit 'evy? Wonder hif 'e brought a sample steer with 'im. (*Exit.*)

ENTER ESTHER *R. carrying a lighted lamp. Seems much disturbed.*

ESTHER. What shall I do? If I do not tell him he will feel hurt, thinking I distrust him. If I do tell him, he will think I in some measure credit the rumor, or I would not think it of sufficient importance to merit any attention.

Passes across stage and exits. Re-enter JOHN and HERBERT.

HERB. Father, I'm obliged to go to the telegraph office and send a message concerning an order I took to-day. I'll be back in half an hour.

JOHN. Hall right, 'Erbert. Hi'll lie 'ere on the sofa huntill you get back.

(*Turns down gas. Lies down. Stage darkened. Exit HERB. L. U. E.*) My 'ed his has 'evy has Jedediah's trunk. This trouble strikes me hall huv a 'eap. Mebby we're makin' ha mistake hin not speakin' of hit. But hi haint the 'art, hi haint the 'art.

(*The following business must be very rapid. Commotion outside as of some one running down stairs. JOHN bounds up. HARDIN rushes in R. U. E. JOHN seizes him, but is thrown violently back against the scenes by HARDIN who darts out L. U. E. JED. rushes in R. U. E. in shirt sleeves. In darkness JOHN thinks it the same man and rushes at him. They close and fight desperately. Rush in from various directions, MRS. C., MISS B., ESTHER and SALLY. MRS. C. turns on the gas. Ejaculations of surprise, and the two men stand looking foolishly at each other.*)

JED. Gewhittaker crickets! This is scandalous fer a per

son in my position. I 'low the great American eagle sailed in on the British lion a leetle too soon that time !

JOHN. Hi'm thankful the Hamerican Heagle left the British lion a 'air to 'is 'ead.

CURTAIN—*End of Act I.*

ACT II.

SCENE *same as ACT I.* *Next morning. Sewing machine may be left off. Sally discovered with cloth around her head sweeping vigorously as the curtain rises.*

SALLY. Land of goodness, such a muss. (*Titters.*) I've hearn tell that when Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war, and when Dutch meets Dutch, then comes the lager beer, but when the American Eagle meets the British Lion, there beent any words to tell wot happens. It's fun for the kitchen ladies anyhow, ha, ha, ha, he, he, he, ho, ho, ho. (*Loud rapping at D. F.*)

(*SALLY opens door and in steps briskly MR. PRENTISS.*)

P. Good-morning, madam, if you are married, Miss if you are not, beautiful winter weather; do you bake, brew, cook or stew, ply the needle or wield the broom, or try to keep cobwebs out of your room, wish to make pickles, preserves or sweets, can corn, cucumbers, berries or meats, do you; do you wish to accomplish any of these feats cuisine, then in order to insure that success which will satisfy the digestive apparatus and thereby elevate the moral nature and lead to genial disposition in husband, uncle, nephew, brother, boarder, visitor, sponger, lover, buy at a trifling cost this most wonderful publication that has gladdened the eyes of this day and generation. (*SALLY stands in open mouthed wonder.*) Thank the lucky star, moon or constellation of your destiny that you have lived to see this wonderful Universal Formulary of Materia Medica

Pharmaceutical, Culinary and Domestic Preparations, the price of which is only—

ENTER MRS. C.

SALLY. (*Speaking in a hoarse voice.*) Please ma'am, here's a insane lunatic wot's talked me hoarse with his lingo about a little of everything on earth and something about the starry heavens. He'll never need nothin' to cut the cobwebs outen his throat. (*Shoulders her broom and marches off in disgust.*)

P. (*Blandly.*) Pardon my apparent intrusion, madam; before I proceed may I inquire whether I address the lady of the house or one of the daughters of the family, or—

MRS. C. I am the lady of the house. Please be seated. (*She sits in easy chair.*)

P. (*Seating himself.*) My conscience troubles me when I take time to sit down with so many people in this populous city unpossessed of a copy of this great panacea for one hundred and fifty per cent. of all the ills that mortal flesh is heir to. It furnishes a recipe for every imaginable article that is to be constructed, manufactured or decocted from raspberry jam to a roaring milldam, excuse the seeming profanity; it tells you how to make the hair grow on a bald husband's head—I should say a husband's bald head, how to get a second set of teeth, but that doesn't interest you, altogether too young (*kneels at her right and holds book open before her*), informs one concerning the writing of love sonnets and poetry, tells you it isn't in good form to say (*Enter JOHN R.*) "I have long adored you at a distance most charming idol of my heart, and have longed to encircle you in my loving arm." (*JOHN seizes him by the collar, jerks him to his feet and whirls him round, book flies into the air, but P. catches it, whips it open and holds it before JOHN's face.*)

JOHN. (*Angrily.*) Hidol of my 'art, eh, you rascal! Hencircle you hin my loving harm!

P. No harm intended and I wasn't aware that any hencircle was mentioned. I'm a missionary, spreading the butter of

domestic, political and municipal truth on the moldy bread of human ignorance by introducing this wonderful conglomeration of formulas and recipes; tells you how to become an alderman, and how to make it lucrative. The recipe shows if my memory serves me right, the ingredients essential to the make up of that august personage, to be about as follows: Individuality 3, cheek 89, self confidence 45, wind 99, brains 2; total 100. It also gives, I think, the proper ingredients for county commissioners, managers of hospitals, manipulators of telephone stock companies, etc., but as the two ingredients, wind and gall, furnish the principal part of them all, I'll not take time to find them this morning, but call your attention to—

JOHN. Zounds, man, your tongue goes like a rotary fan run by a dynamo.

P. Electricity's a back number compared with me, that's true; but let me have your order for this wonderful work. All the great questions of the day are answered herein, very concisely.

JOHN. His hit possible?

P. Possible it may not seem, but a fact it is, sir.

JOHN. Now hi'd like to know wot hit says about the fishery question.

P. (*Without looking at book.*) It says the chief question is, Where's the bait?

JOHN. You rascal! You hinsult me.

P. In our vernacular I am canvassing you, soliciting your subscription.

JOHN. Hi'm solicitin' your silence, hand hi must av it.

P. (*Showing prospectus.*) Your hand upon one of the leaves of my prospectus will *relieve* you of my presence. (JOHN *kicks at him*).

JOHN. Better go or you'll 'ave no reason to say you've 'ad a bootless job 'ere.

P. (*Starting hastily toward the door.*) What boots it if I gain

a subscription and lose my spinal column? (*Turns round and comes part way back*). Price is only seven dollars and fifty cents, bound in calf.

JOHN. You're a boundin' calf. Habscond!!

P. Subscribe. (*Holding prospectus before his face*.)

JOHN. Git hout!

P. For six and a half.

JOHN. Did hanybody hever see the like!

P. It is dirt cheap. (*JOHN forcibly puts him out*.)

JOHN. (*Puffing*.) Thank 'eaven hi am rid of 'im. (*P. sticks head in at door*.)

P. Make it a V.

JOHN. Hi'll make hit a black I.

P. O. I. C.

JOHN. Hif hi catch you again hi'll W hup.

P. (*Serently*.) C. O. D. (*JOHN rushes out after him*.)

ENTER R. JED. *in shirt sleeves with handkerchief in hand*.

JED. Whew! Talk about warm weather. (*Takes a thermometer out of trousers pocket and inspects it*.) This is the warmest winter weather I ever knowed. Here it is 90 degrees in the shade. (*Puts thermometer back in pocket*. JED. *faces audience*. Enter P. *cautiously at back, opens book, slaps JED. sharply on back with right hand and thrusts the book in his face with left*.)

P. Of all the useful information in this great depository none is more serviceable, agreeable and economical than the direction for keeping warm during this execrable cold weather.

JED. Cold weather! Must be ye're engaged in colonizin' the Pacific Islands.

P. Not so, sir. I'm a missionary endeavoring to illuminate the Stygian darkness of human ignorance by the dazzling light of this darkness dispelling dynamo. (*JED. thrusts thermometer in his face*.)

JED. Cast yer peeper on thet if ye think this is cold weather.

P. Yes, but we don't all live in your trousers pocket. Many a man's pocket is warmer than his heart, and it's a cold day when you touch either one, but I must warm up to my business—

JED. Better cool down to good manners fust, young feller.

P. No offence intended. I have but a few moments to spare, as thousands are waiting with bated breath to see me and subscribe for this most wonderful literary production this century has put forth—

JED. Donnelly's great Cryptogram? (P. *rolls up his eyes, collapses and falls to the floor.* JED. *alarmed, bends over him.*) Lor, I didn't think it 'ud strike so hard. (*Tries by various means to revive him. Fans him with his hat; rubs his hands, etc., and finally drags him to sofa.*) Whew! Gewhittiker onions, this is a scrape. They'll think my temper got the better of me and have me up for salt and peppery—I mean salt and battery—and I a J. P. at that. Wall, I 'low I'd better fetch a bucket of water. (*Exits hastily D. F.*)

P. (*Hastily springing up.*) Now's my time. I thought I never should gain access to that room unnoticed. (*Catches up book from floor and exits hastily R. U. E.*)

ENTER MISS B. R. & E. *attired for street. Stands down front and soliloquizes.*

BOB. I never was more uncertain what course to take. This is a risky piece of business. Perhaps he isn't as green as I thought him. I almost fancied last night that he had a suspicion. If the bird dodge doesn't prove successful I'll try him on something else. Condemn a conscience any way! Why is it I can never feel quite satisfied to bleed even an old back number like him, who will soon drop out of sight and leave his money to be quarreled over by his relatives. I ought to feel that I am doing the world a service to put the old skin-flint's wealth in circulation. Conscience, begone! I'm doing humanity a kindness for which I'll never get any thanks. (*Exits loftily L. U. E.*)

RE-ENTER P. *holding in his hand two watches and a ring.*

P. This settles it. Three easily identified pieces of jewelry, taken from the store the night of the robbery. (*Drops them into pocket, throws book on floor and drops upon sofa.* ENTER JED. *with pail of water.* P. *opens his eyes as JED. is about to throw it on him.*)

P. (*Rising slowly.*) Hold on, sir! What's the matter?

JED. Laws! Question I war jest about ter ax you.

P. Did you—did you subscribe? (*Picking up book.*) There's a wonderful recipe for preparing a starch that will—

JED. Make a book agent stand alone? You'd better use it.

P. Also directions for preparing a paste that will cover the most shiny head that ever shone with a thick covering of downy hair.

JED. Come, youngster, ye've made me heaps o' trouble. If ye don't leave these diggin's at once, ye'll need a paste ter cover a black eye. (*Assuming a belligerent attitude.*) Vamoose! (*P. makes a pass at him and rushes off D. F.*)

JED. He's the most cantankerous young critter I ever seed. Nimble as a perliceman—gettin' away from a row, and as cheeky as a lightnin' rod agent. (ENTER MISS B. *at back.*)

BOB. (*Seating herself on the sofa.*) Oh, Mr. Judkins.

JED. (*Promptly seating himself by her side.*) Ef ye owe Mr. Judkins, pay him.

BOB. I have so longed all the morning for the opportunity to enlist your sympathy in the noble work in which I am engaged!

JED. (*Gallantly.*) Name it, Miss, name it.

BOB. Ah, sir, you are indeed kind to show an interest in a cause in which a poor friendless—I should say a devoted and enthusiastic woman is wholly wrapped up, body and soul. The poor innocent birds! How I pity them!

JED. Hev ter present thar bills on female headgear too often, eh?

BOB. Isn't it shocking? Women decorating their hats and

bonnets with the plumage of slaughtered innocence ! It out-herods Herod.

JED. But I 'low they wear the birds' wings so they'll be familiar with 'em ef they ever git any wings uv thar own.

BOB. Oh, sir, I have met with so much kindness and so many quick responses to my charitable plan !

JED. Ye've got me on the ragged edge about it, do let me hear it.

BOB. Well, sir, my plan is this. I am getting the signatures of leading and humane men everywhere to a petition to the legislature to pass stringent laws concerning the slaughter of birds.

JED. (*Appearing much interested.*) Good enough ! On a regular *lark*, so ter speak, aint yer ? (ENTER SALLY *with broom. Remains up, listens, chews gum vigorously, and shakes her fist occasionally.*)

BOB. I'm meeting with marked success.

JED. Ef ye git the law passed how ye'll *cackle* !

BOB. Nearly everybody seems willing to sign. Even the most close fisted and hard hearted old—

JED. *Vultures.*

BOB. However, I occasionally meet with insult. One man told me the birds were able to take care of themselves.

JED. He is an early worm, I'll bet a hoss.

MISS B. Another quoted Scripture about the sparrow not falling to the ground, etc.

JED. He must a bin an old *parrot*.

BOB. Another was so ungentlemanly as to imitate my tone of voice, and when I said "Will you sign ?" he screamed out "I decline."

JED. Regular *mockin'-bird*.

BOB. Still another said that the buzzards at the Capitol know enough to take care of their feathered kin.

JED. The old *crow* ! Afeared the buzzards ud get the carcass away from him.

BOB. You see they make a great variety of excuses for not signing. I filled my last list yesterday, and I'll give you the honor of heading a new list. (*Producing paper.*) You'll sign, won't you?

JED. (*Aside.*) I 'low she thinks me jest such a *goose*. (*Direct.*) Oh, certainly, certainly, that's the kind of a *blue jay* I am. I 'low I'll do jest what ye say. (*Aside.*) When Fourth of July comes on Christmas day.

BOB. (*Resting her hand on his shoulder.*) How very kind and good you are! (JED. *appears pleased. She hands him the paper.*) There's the place to sign. (*Points to it.*)

JED. Gewhittaker crickets! but I don't seem ter know jest what I'm signin', an' I haint got my glasses,

BOB. I'll read it to you. (*Reads.*)

"The undersigned, citizens of this commonwealth, believing that our feathered songsters are a blessing to mankind, adding to man's enjoyment by their melodies, and contributing to his welfare by destroying injurious insects, would hereby respectfully petition your honorable body to stop by stringent enactments, the unwarrantable destruction of our harmless birds."

JED. That sounds fust rate, but I haint got a pen handy. (MISS B. *holds out an automatic pen.*) I 'low thar aint a bit o' ink in the house.

BOB. Try running that pen over the paper, and notice how smooth the point is. Just run through with the letters of your name. A person in your position is no doubt a good judge of a pen.

JED. (*Writing his name.*) Wall, I *am* a good jedge uv a pen. (*Aside.*) A pig pen. (MISS B. *eyes his hand sharply and suddenly snatches the paper from his hands.*)

BOB. Splendid, isn't it? (*Aside.*) Got with perfect ease. (SALLY *marches down to center with broom on her shoulder. Points her finger at Miss B.*)

SALLY. (*Tragically.*) "Out, you mad headed ape!
A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen
As you are toss'd with!"

BOB. What does the simpleton mean?

SALLY. Ha, ha, ha, he, he, he, ho, ho, ho. (*Waves broom in air.*) I'm a simpleton, oh yes, I'm a simpleton! I'm a idiot, I'm a fool. (*Drops broom upon Miss B.'s head and knocks off her bonnet.*) But I haint so green that they wants to git me to decorate churches with ov a Christmas 'day. (*In a loud whisper.*) An' I haint sech a fool as to sign no name to nothink.

JED. Come, come, gal, breath's too skase ter use it so reckless.

BOB. (*Trying to adjust her bonnet.*) You'll excuse me while I repair the mischief this jade has done. (*To SALLY, fiercely.*) Hussy!

SALLY. (*At charge bayonet with the broom.*) Call me jade and hussy if it do you any good, but don't say nothink about my bein' a hypercrit an' cheat, unless ye want to cough up them false teeth. (*Miss B. exits loftily.*)

JED. Wall, I'd like ter know wot's got yer dander up so high.

SALLY. I don't know much, but I know more'n people thinks I do. I know enough to run when the Old Boy comes at me with a pair of tongs.

JED. Wot the mischief do ye mean?

SALLY. I thought you knowed better nor to sign that paper.

JED. I didn't sign it. They want no ink on the pen.

SALLY. Lawk, how green you be. Ye're a fool but ye aint a big fool like me. Ye're a little one for a cent. That pen had ink *in* it.

JED. I didn't see no ink.

SALLY. Yer eyes aint much sharper nor yer wits. But it *is* pale at fust. It'll be black as her heart fore you see it agin. Yer name is signed fast enough.

JED. Wall, I 'low thar's no harm ter come o' that.

SALLY. Oh, no, I spose not. It was nothink but a promise to pay her a lot of money.

JED. (*Springing to his feet.*) That's a whopper! It war a

petition ter the legislater. (SALLY takes a piece of paper from her pocket and shows it to JED.)

SALLY. That's the petition, an' you signed jest below it. Lift up that thin paper and see wot ye really *did* sign. I foun' it in her room not half an hour ago. (JED. *reading meantime.*)

JED. (*Dropping upon sofa.*) Five thousand dollars! A note for five thousand dollars! She throwed this one away 'cause she had made a leetle mistake in it. (*Starting up.*) But I'll find her and git it back. (*Starts to rush off D. F., meets a POLICEMAN entering. POLICEMAN seizes him by collar.*)

POL. Not so fast. Where are you going?

JED. Don't seem ter be goin' much uv anywhar jest now. War a saunterin' out ter ketch a 'ooman wot cheated me into signin' a note fer \$5,000.

POL. What's your name?

JED. Jedediah Jackson Judkins, er words to that effect. But ye'd better let me go an' ketch that sharper. (*Struggles.*)

ENTER ESTHER R. U. E.

POL. You couldn't catch her if you were twice as old as you are. She rattled off in a cab just as I came in. Besides, this house is guarded and no one will be allowed to leave it until it is searched.

ESTHER. Sir, you do not mean to say that we must submit to that indignity! There are no dishonest people here.

POL. I'm sorry to say it, Miss, but it must be done. People are not all as honest as they seem to be.

ENTER MRS. C.

ESTHER. There's some terrible mistake about it.

POL. I'm afraid not, Miss. (*Showing watches and ring.*) These were taken from this house but a short time ago by one of our men. They disappeared from the store of Windum & Tick night before last.

MRS. C. (*In great agony.*) Oh, my poor boy! They are trying to work his ruin.

POL. I must proceed with this disagreeable business, madam. Show me to your son's room. (MRS. C. *motions in direction and sinks into a chair.* POL. *exits.*)

JED. Well, ef I don't hate city ways, then call me pusley!

ESTHER. (*Wringing her hands.*) What a cruel fate is this!

JED. Thar, thar, little gal, don't ye go ter takin' on so. I've lived a heap more year nor you, and I've often noticed wot seems our biggest troubles air our biggest blessings in disguise. (*Aside.*) I wish ter goodness I hed that cantankerous swindlin' female critter here a minit, I'd choke her. (*Direct.*) Every cloud has a silver linin'. (*Aside.*) Oh, Lor, I'm afeard my wollet won't hev no silver near its linin' after some bank cashes that note an' calls on me for payment.

ENTER JOHN.

MRS. C. I wish we had called Herbert before daylight and hurried him out of the reach of the officers.

JOHN. No, no, Mary Jane; hif 'e's hinnocent 'e'll come hout hall right, hand hif 'e's guilty 'e'll 'ave to suffer the consequences.

MRS. C. Guilty! John; guilty! you don't mean to hint that you for a moment think our boy guilty?

JOHN. No, Mary Jane, hov course not; but hif hit was hany other boy than hours hi'd say it looked suspicious. (*Wipes his eyes.*)

RE-ENTER POLICEMAN *bringing* HERBERT *handcuffed.* *All gather round him in great distress.* MRS. C. *sobbing, puts head on his shoulder.* Officer *stands quietly at back.*

MRS. C. My dear boy, we all know that you are not guilty of this terrible accusation, but we wish to know from your own lips, lips that have never told a lie, the truth of the whole matter.

POL. Don't ask him to criminate himself before witnesses. See, here is a piece of paper on which is written dozens of times a perfect imitation of the signature of Windum & Tick. I found it in his drawer just now.

JED. (*Aside.*) Poor lad, it will go hard with him.

JOHN. 'Erbert, 'Erbert, 'aven't you a word to say for yourself?

ESTHER. Speak out, Herbert; your word with us carries greater weight than all the circumstantial evidence in the world.

HERBERT. It is as much of a mystery to me as it can be to any one. Night before last I went to my room at the store rather late. In the morning I felt partly stupefied, and did not feel quite myself until I had taken the train. Getting home late last night, and not happening to see the papers, I could not understand the peculiar state you all were in. I went down and tried to get into the store last night, but found on looking that my key had been taken from the ring.

MRS. C. Did you notice anything peculiar in the appearance of the store when you came out yesterday morning?

HERB. No. I didn't look at the safe in which the most valuable goods are placed at night.

MRS. C. You haven't explained how the jewelry came to be secreted in your room.

HERB. I know nothing about that.

POL. It's time to go.

HERB. Good-bye, mother; good-bye, father. (*Takes ESTHER by the hand, but is unable to speak.*)

JED. Herbert, my lad, I've jest now fooled myself outen \$5,000, but I 'low I've got enough left to go yer bail, and fry my gizzard ef I don't blow in twice \$5,000 but you shall have justice done ye. I'll find the best pettifogger in this city, an' he'll clar ye cleaner'n a double hardened mouldboard in a sandbank; leastwise, ef he don't it won't be fer want uv chargin' enough.

HERB. Thank you, uncle; you are very kind. (*At back with officer.*) Good-bye, all. Keep up courage. This thought shall sustain me: Accused innocence is far better than unaccused guilt. (*Exits with officer.*)

Positions as follows: SALLY at extreme R. shaking her head and looking belligerent. ESTHER at C. supporting MRS. C. JOHN left of C. with right hand stretched toward door, left upon forehead. JED. at left of JOHN with right hand resting on JOHN'S shoulder.

CURTAIN—*End of Act II.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*May be omitted without making disconnection of parts. A street in the city at daylight. Flats in 1 G. JED discovered looking about him in wonder.*

ENTER PRENTISS *disguised as a fop. Walking briskly, stumbles against JED, who thrusts left arm into P.'s right, and holds him.*

JED. Beg pardon, neighbor, but I 'low from yer git up ye know the town.

P. Awe, weally sir, you must not detain me. I have pwessing business, donchernaw.

JED. (*Taking out plug of tobacco and biting off a piece.*) Yes, I gnaw. Hev some? (*Presenting it.*)

P. Weally, you must excuse me.

JED. So ye're on *pressin'* business. Too arly ter go ter see the gals. Say, aint they a powerful sight o' houses round yer? Beats Poseyville all holler.

P. Indeed!

JED. I 'low they haint got no sech turnouts ez Deacon Blifkins'. Reg'lar baroach. Place fer driver, too. Lor, it's stylish.

P. The city tunouts don't tunout so ully in the mawning. (*Rattle of wheels and rapid strokes of a gong heard at distance.*)

JED. (*Excited.*) Wot's thet a flukin' down the street? (*Points off R.*)

P. It's only a fish-engine going to put out a fish.

JED. Gewhittaker crickets! Les' git some buckets an' run an' help. (*Starts R. dragging P. with him.*)

P. (*Struggling.*) Naw, naw, they don't need help. Knock yoah bwains out with a billy if you penetwate the wing.

JED. Shucks! I aint afeard o' no billies. Got one in my barn-yard to home thet tries ter knock my brains out every time I stoop over.

P. Awe, I wanternaw! (JED *promptly extends plug.* P. *shakes head.*) Weally, you don't seem at home in the city, suh.

JED. 'Thet may be, yer honor, an' ter tell the truth, I aint. I'm tryin' now ter find the perlice station.

P. Weally, you mustn't talk about the police station, or some one will think I'm in yoah custody.

JED. I'm a cuss ter-day, myself, Mr. Faint an' Fall In It book agent.

P. (*Assuming natural tone.*) S—h! Don't talk too loud. How in the world did you know me?

JED. (*Releasing him.*) Shouldn't uv ef it hadn't been fer them two little moles under yer right ear.

P. I'll see to them hereafter. But what brings you out so early?

JED. I'm lookin' fer a cantankerous critter that swindled me into signin' a note fer five thousand dollars. Don't keer so much about the money as the disgrace ter a person in my position. J. P. Swindled by a ooman, too.

P. What is her name?

JED. Not bein' persessed o' no supernatural knowledge I can't tell ye. She sailed as Miss Bobbin.

P. Ah, ha! Miss Bobbin alias Miss Banks, really Annie Craig, who has been playing this game for months upon the unsophisticated people who visit the city. She's sharp, but I hope to trap her yet.

JED. Serves me right. I might have knowed better.

P. Correct. Four *don'ts* a countryman who comes to town

should heed, are : Don't visit disreputable places ; don't tell your business to strangers ; don't sign your name to anything but the hotel register, and don't blow out the gas.

JED. Lor, it ud take a New York City blizzard ter blow out all the gas in this town.

P. Now, about that note. I'm a member of the detective agency here and I'll help you recover the note if it is possible. Meet me this afternoon at three, at this place (*giving card*) and we'll talk the matter over. If you ever recognize me in disguise, don't give me away.

JED. I won't. (*Looking off R.*) Wot's thet high stepper tryin' ter do with thet purty gal?

P. One of those rascally cabmen who has promised to take her to a distant part of the city and is trying to make her walk part of the way. I'll see about that. (*Hurries off R. Conversation outside in loud tones.*)

CABMAN. I tell yer, madam, ye'll hef ter git out here. My hoss has been on the go all night and can't go no furdur.

P. Madam, how much did you pay him, for of course you paid him or he wouldn't stop here?

JED. You bet. (*Looking off R. much interested.*)

BER. I paid him a dollar to take me to Twenty-third street.

P. Well, Cabby, give her the money or take her to her destination.

CAB. Well, Dudie, I'll do nothin' of the kind.

P. You've mistaken your man, and, as I'm an officer, if you don't go on or hand over the money I'll arrest you. I can make it cost you many times that amount. This rascally trick is being played too often.

BER. I'll not ride a step farther with the fellow.

CAB. (*Throwing down the money on floor outside so that it rings.*) There it is ! Anything to beat poor hardworking cabmen.

P. Yes, I know. Poor but dishonest. (*Enters carrying a valise.*) Right this way, madam. Here's a car that will take you to Twenty-third. (ENTER BER. *in traveling attire.*)

BER. (*As they cross the stage.*) How can I repay you for this kindness?

P. To know that it is looked upon as a kindness is enough. Many ladies accept such services as inherent rights, with never a "Thank you." (*They exit at L.*)

JED. Wall, I'll be jiggered! Thet youth orter be Lord Mayor. He knows his gait, or I shud say his various gaits, fer he's got a heap uv 'em. He's a reg'lar out an' out gold brick. "A dandy but not a dude." (*Imitating him.*) Awe wevowr! (*Exits R.*)

(*Flats run back. End of scene.*)

SCENE II.—*Room at police station. Plain table and three or four chairs. DECAMP and HARDIN seated in shirt sleeves at table R. of C. playing cards. Their coats hang on wall. Either one of them may sing the following song. Both might sing on chorus. Song may be omitted entirely. AIR, "Brannigan's Pup." May be sung in Irish brogue.*

We're a brace of bold burglars tied up in a bag,
 Our chances seem scaly just now.
 We've picked up a great many fine bits of swag,
 We got them—I'll not tell you how.
 We crack people's houses, we do it for pelf,
 Be assured that it isn't at all in play.
 In Joliet soon we'll be laid on the shelf,
 There they're not very jolly, they say.

CHORUS.

Oh ho! We're no good, to be sure,
 We rob you whenever we can,
 But we don't put on airs,
 As becomes "bulls" and "bears,"
 And steal on the "High Moral" plan.

There's no misplaced confidence in us, you know,
 As there is in McGarigle's like;
 And we've not yet come down so hopelessly low
 As to get up a base burglar strike.

We attend to our business, from boycotts fight shy,
We ask but our share of your burglary trade ;
When we call on you, please do not shoot on the sly,
That would tend to make burglars afraid.

CHORUS.

We're not laying claims to great merits, you say,
In the papers we don't advertise,
But let me assure you it's a very hot day,
When burglars are roost on by flies.
On "boodlers," Lord Bacon, Jake Sharp, and their clan,
We look down with feelings of scorn in our hearts.
And we don't think guilt worse in an ignorant man,
Than it is in a Master of Arts.

CHORUS.

HAR. No use talking. We're in a fix. (*Dropping voice to a low key.*) I tell you, the evidence is too strong against us.

DE C. On which ?

HAR. On the cracking we did on Michigan avenue. Wish instead of running I had shot the man that saw us. Then he wouldn't have squealed.

DE C. That would have made it blacker yet.

HAR. There's but one chance. Break from here and make for parts unknown.

DE C. We can't do it. If we had our guns we might.

HAR. I met our Mr. (*twisting hand like winding a clock*) You Know on the street as they were running us in and gave him the wink. I think he'll come down and help us. He wants us out of town bad enough.

ENTER KEEPER *with* HERB. *handcuffed.*

KEEP. You'll stay in these rooms (*pointing off L.*) to-day, as the other is to have some repairs, and to-night you'll be allowed to go back there. (*KEEPER exits and HERBERT sinks into a chair up L.*)

DE C. I say, my bully boy, come over and take a hand.

HAR. Where are your eyes? He has more hands now than he can use.

HERB. (*In distressed voice.*) Thanks, I don't play cards.

HAR. (*Tragically.*) Sir, for the fair fame of this fair city deny your nativity here. Announce to my pained ears that you were born and reared in Boston.

HERB. No, sir, I was born and have lived all my life in this city.

HAR. "Then are we vile indeed."

DE C. Come, deal.

HAR. (*Throwing down cards in mock seriousness.*) I deal? That's my ideal. (*Pointing to HERBERT.*) Bravest of all our brave fraternity. I know them all, from the swell bloak who robs his brother bloak on 'Change up to the modest cracksman who plys his more modest and more dangerous trade in homes of wealth and refinement. I have never found one before who dared say, "I don't play cards." Hereafter the parson here (*stepping over to him*) and myself constitute a mutual protective union against the deadly pasteboards. (*Slaps HERBERT on back.*)

HERB. (*Rising angrily.*) Come, sir, no familiarity. You are going too far with your chaff. I have nothing in common with you or your fraternity.

DE C. Let 'im alone, he's innocent of wot's charged agin' him. (*Laughing loudly.*)

HAR. So are we all, all innocent. If things stick to our fingers are we to blame because nature has waxed them?

DE C. He's waxed warm. Let 'im alone. (*Imitating HERBERT.*) "You are going too far with your chaff." Ha, ha! That's good.

HAR. (*To HERBERT.*) Let's get up a pledge never more to lie, or swear, or gamble, or steal.

HERB. (*Hotly.*) Don't insinuate I'm a thief.

HAR. (*Sneeringly.*) Sneak thief! (*HERBERT steps up to HARDIN threateningly and HAR. slaps him. HERB. rushes upon him,*

gets him by the throat and pushes him over on the table. DE C. seizes a chair, swings it over head to strike HERB. JED. rushes in at D. F. stops the blow, and knocks DE C. down. HAR. has struggled to his feet only to be throttled by JED., who throws him across the prostrate form of DE C. and calmly seats himself upon them.)

JED. A saddle wouldn't be out of place to a person in my position.

ENTER MR. WINDUM. JED. *gets up and HAR. and DE C. slowly rise.*

W. What's all this clatter about?

JED. Jest bin givin' a sample performance with my new fangled compound geared, double back action, combined carpet sweeper and mop. (*Showing up sleeves.*) Want ter see it operate?

W. No, no; by no means. I abhor fights and brawls.

JED. It is rather disgraceful to one in my position. I'm a Justice of the Peace.

HAR. (*Rubbing his elbow.*) More like a Justice of the pieces.

JED. No back talk from the machinery. The combined sweeper and mop will please retire to the closet. (*Points off L. DE CAMP at JED's back stealthily takes out and opens a huge pocketknife and is about to rush upon JED. when JED. draws a revolver, whirls and points it at him.*) Self-cocker! six shots in two seconds. Better drap it. (*DE C. drops knife. JED. picks it up. HAR. and DE C. sullenly retire to room at L.*)

ENTER KEEPER.

JED. Look a here, Mister Keeper, I 'low you'd better take the bracelets off this man ef ye mean ter keep him here with that pair of wolves I jest now chased away.

KEEP. Why, yes, I didn't intend to leave them on him. (*Takes off handcuffs.*)

HERB. (*Facetiously.*) You might leave me a Gatling gun to defend myself with.

KEEP. They're a pair of hard customers, but I think they'll give you no further trouble. (*Exit D. F.*)

W. Now I should be much pleased to have a few moments alone with Mr. Craincross.

JED. (*Aside.*) Laws, ef he don't get a thing it wont be fer want of cheek ter ask fer it. (*Direct.*) Wall, I 'low I'd better go in and clean out my carpet sweeper. (*Takes a revolver in hand and exits L.*)

W. Herbert, your case looks pretty discouraging, but as this is your first offense, and you have always been a faithful clerk, and have perhaps been led into this through evil associations, I am disposed to be lenient.

HERB. (*Sadly.*) So you really think me guilty.

W. Put yourself in my place. Could you then doubt circumstantial evidence so strong as this? Many a man has been hanged on less conclusive evidence.

HERB. Very true. But I thought my life of integrity would tide me over circumstances of this kind. It is simply a villainous plot, by some enemy, to ruin me. Mr. Windum, if there is justice in heaven, this cruel scheme will prove a dagger to the soul of its vile instigator whoever he may be. May it be to him a cup of wormwood to be drained to its very dregs!

W. (*Annoyed.*) Come, come, boy, you must not feel that way about it. I am here to offer a way of escape from the many dreary years that seem to await you in the penitentiary.

HERB. The penitentiary! Oh God! Must I go there? Must I be thrust for half a lifetime into the society of such as these two devils, who but now made an attempt upon my life? Must I be torn away from home and friends, and her I love, and buried alive in that remorseless sepulcher? Let me die first.

W. Truly, the way of the transgressor is hard. But it need

not come to that. I offer you this plan of escape. If you will pledge your word of honor—

HERB. (*Bitterly.*) My word of honor! You forget that you but this minute accused me of theft.

W. Never mind that now. If you will promise to leave the city at once, never again to appear within it, or communicate with your friends here, we will not appear against you.

HERB. But why these severe conditions? Why this exile from home and friends?

W. If you leave at once this matter will die out. If you stay, the State will undoubtedly take the matter up. Anyhow, it would make a theme for constant talk and censure in business circles. Will you do it?

HERB. For various reasons I cannot. It would leave a stain on my name. I must stay and live it down. It would look like running away from guilt, whereas I am perfectly innocent.

W. The world will look upon you as guilty whether you go or stay. Better the pure air of heaven among new friends than the pestilential breath of a great prison house. May I have your answer?

HERB. You have my answer. I will stay and suffer the consequences of another's guilt.

W. Do not blame me. I have tried to show clemency.

HERB. "My deeds upon my head."

W. I'll thank you to call your friend, if friend he be, from the other room. (HERB. *exits L.* W. *takes package from pocket and places it in HARDIN'S coat pocket on the wall.* HERB. *returns with JED.*)

W. (*Very dignified.*) I have offered to drop this case on condition this young man leave city, home and friends forever. I wish to have you for a witness to my proposal.

JED. Home an' friends includin' the sweetheart?

W. Everybody. (*To HERB.*) I now repeat my offer. Do you accept or refuse it?

HERB. (*Decidedly.*) I refuse it.

JED. Of course, of course! When ye included the gal I knowed wot the answer 'ud be. It's sound not ter run. Ef the gallows stared ye in the face, I'd say "git" till yer innercence is established. But seein' it aint a hangin' offence, I say stay and face the music. We'll work away at it till we fasten it on the right feller (*turning suddenly upon W.*) and don't ye forget it, mister.

W. I've nothing more to say. (*HARDIN strolls in from L. W. goes up and addresses him.*) No more rows and assaults upon this young man, mind you. It will make you trouble. (*In a lower tone.*) When I am gone, look in the pocket of your coat. (*To HERBERT.*) I'll bid you good-day. (*Exits loftily.* HERB. *sinks into a chair.* HARDIN *exits L. muttering.* JED. *comes down C. and stands in thoughtful attitude with his finger beside his nose.*)

JED. (*Soliloquizing.*) Now why on yarth shud he want this young feller ter leave these diggins? 'Thar's a ooman in it somewhere. Law, wot won't men do fer the love o' the other sex. Yas, thar's a ooman in the case (*ENTER ESTHER and JOHN*), an' thar she is. (*Business of handshaking, ESTHER, JOHN and HERBERT.*)

JOHN. Hi never thought it ood come to this. (*Wiping his eyes.*) 'Erbert, my boy, hit's 'orrible!

HERB. Indeed it is, father, but "what can't be cured must be endured." I've been very despondent about it, but now I'm determined to find the silver lining to this cloud if it has one.

ESTHER. We met Mr. Windum as we came in. Can he not help you?

HERB. He has been here to see me.

ESTHER. It was kind of him to call upon you.

HERB. He offered not to appear against me on condition.

ESTHER. (*With animation.*) And the condition was—

HERB. To leave the city, home and friends, in short, everything that is dear to me, forever. (*Taking her hands in his.*)

ESTHER. (*Disappointed.*) And you told him—

HERB. What would you have me tell him?

ESTHER. (*With a deep sigh.*) Whatever seems best to you.

HERB. Would it not be wise to flee? If I am convicted I shall be separated from you.

ESTHER. You'll not be convicted. It isn't possible that they could convict an innocent person. (*Anxiously.*) But may I know the answer you gave him?

HERB. I told him I would not flee from it.

ESTHER. (*Relieved.*) I thought you would give him that answer. If accused of murder I would wish you to flee from it if you thought the chances not good for clearing yourself. (*JOHN and JED. are talking earnestly meantime at back of stage, not observing ESTHER and HERBERT.*)

HERB. Let's not talk about it any longer. It's too disagreeable a subject. How is mother, and why didn't she come with you?

ESTHER. I have good news for you. Bernice unexpectedly came home this morning, but being too ill to come, mother staid with her. One of her sick headaches.

HERB. It's delightful to think of her at home again. She, with her good spirits, will help to cheer the others up.

ESTHER. When you come home we'll be happy and cheerful enough. God grant that may be soon. (*Strokes of a distant bell.*)

HERB. Hark! The cathedral bell is striking twelve. "High twelve," it joyfully rings out to those permitted to breathe the fresh, pure air of heaven; to those not circumscribed by four dingy walls. How true it is that we do not appreciate even our choicest blessings until we lose them.

ESTHER. Each day until we meet again, I'll offer up at noon a silent prayer for your swift release and established innocence.

HERB. Each day at noon I'll think of you, my guiding star to all that is good and true, and offer up the incense of an unquenchable devotion upon love's sacred altar.

ESTHER. Good-bye, until we meet again

HERB. (*Kissing her.*) Good-bye, good-bye. (*Shakes hands silently with JOHN and JED. All three exit D. F. Enter L. HARDIN and D. C. HERBERT exit L without speaking to them.*)

HAR. That cursed old threshing machine has gone, it seems. (*They hasten to the coat and take out the package W. has left. HARDIN looking cautiously around, takes out two revolvers and bank bills.*) Two barkers! (*Counts money and gives some to D. C.*) Five hundred dollars! (*They sit at table and HAR. reads the following note:*)

"If you succeed in getting away, flee at once. There are rumors afloat that may lead to a slip noose. If you ever slip a word I'll turn State's evidence concerning the men in the barrel. Mum's the word." Think of that! And we thought we had him on the string! If ever I have any more deal with a high-toned non-professional bloak you may take my lungs for a life preserver.

D. C. What's our best move now?

HAR. Anything to get away. There's usually only one man at this station at this hour. (*ENTER KEEPER, HAR. down R. with his revolver behind him; D. C. up L., boldly.*) Mr. Keeper, I wish you to understand that I'm one of those exceedingly polite crooks you read about in the papers, so I will state my request in a genteel manner. Have the kindness to allow us to depart in peace from this very objectionable place of incarceration.

KEEPER. If you mean by that to ask me to let you out, I'll say candidly that I'll see both your necks stretched first.

HAR. Come, now, don't be too hasty. We have money. Perhaps, knowing that, you'll reconsider your answer. Members of the force have received rewards of this kind.

KEEPER. You never saw enough gold to bribe me.

HAR. Then take lead. (*Presents revolver and fires. KEEPER falls. Both run to door in flat but HAR. slips, falls and drops his revolver. Regains feet and exits, leaving revolver near officer. HERB. rushes in L.*)

HERB. Heavens! What foul deed is this? The keeper killed? (*Bends over him.*) With this revolver! (*Picking it up, puts hand wildly to head, and tries to think. Horrified.*) They'll suspect me! They'll think uncle left this revolver to kill the keeper with. The gallows stares me in the face. They all agreed that if it were murder I would be justified in fleeing from it. It's escape or death! (*Seizes keeper's hat, pulls it over his eyes, slips revolver under his coat and hastily exits D. F.*)

CURTAIN—*End of Scene 2.*

SCENE III. *Same as ACT I.* MRS. C. *sitting in easy chair reading paper.* ESTHER *on sofa crocheting.*

ESTHER. Any news concerning the wounded officer, Mrs. Craincross?

MRS. C. I can find none.

ESTHER. If he recovers, his testimony will establish Herbert's innocence of being an accomplice to the assault upon him.

MRS. C. Poor boy, what he must suffer these days! It's no wonder he fled from such a charge as would have been made against him.

ESTHER. I'm glad he escaped without making any conditions. I feel confident he will return and that it will come out all right and we shall yet find the silver lining to the cloud.

MRS. C. He may be in California by this time. (*Boy at a distance screaming Evening Papers!*) [NOTE. *Prolong the first E very much and make the word "papers" almost inaudible.*] There's a news boy. He may have a later edition than this. Tell Sally to get one. Ah, I forgot. Poor Sally!

ESTHER. I'll get one. (*Exit D. F.*)

MRS. C. So strange about that servant! She seemed to have something on her mind but would tell me nothing. Acted as if she wanted to tell but dared not. Poor thing, and now she's in an insane asylum. I believe she knew something about the way in which that jewelry came to be in the house, but was intimidated into silence.

ENTER ESTHER *reading paper.*

ESTHER. (*Her face lighting up as she reads.*) Oh, joyful news! (*Reads heading aloud.* ENTER BER. *and stands in sight of audience and listens.*) Wounded Police Station Officer able to talk. Young Craincross exonerated of having part in the Assault. Buck Hardin Did the Deed. (*Throws paper to Mrs. C.* BER. *springs forward, clapping her hands.*)

BER. Isn't that delightful? Best news I've heard since I was a "hinfant in harms," as pa would say. (*Drops on her knees at Mrs. C.'s side.*) Next thing on the programme, Mommy Dear, will be the return of the absent one, at the head of a grand procession, the band playing "See the Conquering Hero Comes," innocence established, the guilty confounded, and everybody happy, just like a play instead of sober everyday life.

ESTHER. Ah, Bernice, how I envy you your sanguine nature!

BER. Oh, I'm a regular Mark Tapley in petticoats. Jolly!

MRS. C. I'm glad some one can be jolly.

ESTHER. But who is to go after the absent one?

BER. I'll send a detective. (*Seating herself in a chair.*)

ESTHER. You talk as if you own the agency.

MRS. C. She seems to have a small portion of it at command. (*Ring of distant door bell.*)

ESTHER. It wouldn't be surprising if the small portion were coming now to receive orders. (*Exits to answer bell.*)

BER. Don't I look like a fright, mother?

MRS. C. You don't appear to be *in* a fright.

BER. (*Rising hastily.*) "She who frights and runs away,
May live to fright another day."

(*About to exit.*)

MRS. C. No, don't run away and leave your poor mother to the tender mercies of the enemy.

BER. Oh, I don't expect an enemy. However, seeing you happen to be a trifle older than I, I'll take your advice and

remain. (ENTER ESTHER and MR. W. *Aside.*) Perhaps it is an enemy, after all. Any way, I dislike him. (MRS. C. *greets him warmly.*)

BER. (*Coldly.*) Good-evening.

W. (*Taking a scat.*) Of course you've heard the latest about the wounded officer?

MRS. C. Yes, we have just learned it from the paper.

W. It's very gratifying to have one blot removed from your son's good name.

MRS. C. We feel that his good name is blotted only in the eyes of his enemies.

W. To be sure his friends will be slow to think ill of him.

BER. (*With asperity.*) And we don't care what his enemies think of him.

ESTHER. It's a mystery to me how the crooks secured their weapons.

W. Perhaps they were not thoroughly searched when arrested.

BER. That's not likely. My opinion is there's an accomplice. (*Looking at W.*)

ESTHER. Is any effort being made to find them?

W. In a perfunctory way. They're all at a safe distance ere this. In Canada, perhaps. They'll not be seen here soon.

MRS. C. No danger but that our boy will return as soon as sufficient evidence is secured to establish his innocence.

BER. I'll go to find him myself if I cannot induce any one else to go. (*Another ring at the door bell. ESTHER answers it.*)

W. (*To BER.*) It's not easy to find him. He may assume a disguise and take every precaution against re-arrest. In some remote place, under an assumed name, let us hope he may find happiness. (*To MRS. C.*) Permit me to remind you, dear madam, that these dark hours which come to so many of us, and may come to all, are not wholly an unmixed evil. From the altar of our heart's greatest sacrifices may come a consecrating and strengthening influence that will enable us to

more fully sympathize with and relieve the suffering of those around us.

MRS. C. Thank you for your kind words. How inclined we are to magnify our own afflictions above those of our neighbors! (RE-ENTER ESTHER *followed by* MR. PRENTISS.)

P. (*Nods to W. and shakes hands with* MRS. C.) Of course you are rejoicing over the good news. (*Passes to* BER. *and shakes hands.*) Was afraid this morning that I should have to bear the disagreeable news of the officer's death, as he was very low. (*Taking a seat.*) But he rallied and was able to tell me all about it.

BER. Are there any new conjectures in the matter?

P. There's every indication of an accomplice, but who it could have been is a mystery. Only a few visited the room, and the officer says the prisoners were carefully searched. (ENTER JED. *unobserved, D. F.*)

MR. W. Herbert's friend, the old man, had a revolver with him at the station. Isn't it probable that one of them stole it from his pocket?

JED. (*Coming forward, drawing revolver, holds it muzzle foremost out to* W.) Bet a hoss it ain't neither probable nor possible. See them three J's on the barl? Jedediah Jackson Judkins.

W. (*Nervously draws back. Exclamations of surprise from* MRS. C., ESTHER, *and* BER. *at seeing* JED.) Please present it handle first. It might go off.

JED. I 'low it might send *me* ter the happy huntin' grounds then, an' I'd hate that like blazes. I aint prepared ter go like you air.

W. I'm in no haste to go, I assure you.

JED. Laws, in course ye aint. No matter how strong our faith may be we aint any uv us jest itchin' ter go over ter the majority.

P. (*Slapping* JED. *on back.*) You're correct, partner.

JED. (*Shaking his hand warmly.*) Laws, howdy, howdy! I'm powerful glad ter see yer.

BER. How did you come to return so soon, uncle?

JED. Goin' ter shake the hay-seed outen my har an' be a city swell. Sold my farm an' now I'm goin' ter be a detective and with the detectives stan', honest sweat upon my forrid—

BER. And a \$5,000 promissory note within your hand.

JED. Thar, sissy, you may go ter the head uv the class.

BER. Come now, uncle, what would you give me to find that note for you?

JED. Oh, ho! So you're thinkin' uv bein' a 'prentice ter the detective business, eh? (PRENTISS *laughs heartily*.)

ESTHER. She wouldn't have to be an expert to *detect* your pun, uncle.

W. You're all growing sharp. It must be in the air.

BER. No, it's not in the air, it's in the note. But it really seems as though it might be recovered.

JED. Why shud I want it *recovered*? Laws, ef the note hadn't bin covered I wouldn't bin sech a fool as ter sign it. It's a lastin' disgrace ter a man in my position.

P. But if some one *re covers* the note you can *re sign*. But seriously, I think Miss Craincross' native shrewdness might furnish the key by which to find it.

JED. Then she'd hev the key note, wouldn't she? Thet makes me think I'd be powerful glad ter hev a song from the young ladies.

(*Introduce songs, solo, duet or any other vocal music practicable.*

W. *at conclusion of song takes his hat to go.*)

JED. (To W.) Don't yer like music? "He thet heth not music (*Enter JOHN wearing a pair of squeaky boots*) in his soul, is fit fer treason, stratagem and spoils!"

JOHN. (*Shaking hands with JED.*) 'Oly brother of Haron! Hif my soul wasn't quite so musical hit would be more hinspirin'.

W. *goes to door.* ESTHER *accompanies him. He takes her hand and bows very low.*

W. I'll bid you all good-night. (*Exits D. F.*)

P. (*To JED. down C. sneeringly.*) Bid you all good-night.

JED. I 'low he couldn't hev made a safer bid.

ESTHER. Come uncle, and have a lunch. You can't survive on chaff.

JED. No, not ef I am a hoss. (*ESTHER exits, followed by JED., JOHN and MRS. C. BER. sits on sofa, P. takes place by her side, his arm on back of sofa behind her.*)

P. How delightful it seems to be alone together !

BER. How is it possible for two people to be alone together. (*Re-enter JED. with a stuffed parrot in a cage. Gives it a place out of sight of BERNICE and PRENTISS.*)

P. That seems no more impossible than—

JED. Ahem ! Air you younguns afeard ter be left yher alone ? Kase ef ye air, I mought stay with ye ef ye want me to real bad, though I'm powerful hungry ; hungry enough thet I wouldn't refuse a dish uv soap bubbles.

P. Miss Craincross thinks we cannot be alone so long as we're together.

JED. So long, eh ? Wall, I'll take the hint ; but don't hev too much ter say ter her about the detective's art (*Starting off.*), no, nor the detective's heart. (*Exits laughing loudly.*)

BER. If uncle weren't allowed to joke, he'd soon ignite—

P. His pipe and smoke.

BER. Why, sir, you take the words right out of my mouth to make rhyme of them.

P. Charming language should be the sequence of such charming origin.

BER. I fear you are a causationist.

P. Your fears are unfounded. I'm a protectionist.

BER. In what sense ?

P. In dollars and cents. I protect the property as well as the rights of citizens by bringing rogues to justice.

BER. Then why don't you bring to justice these rogues who have so monstrously plotted against my brother ?

P. Lack of time and proper incentive. Had I encourage-

ment from you that your brother's complete vindication through my efforts would awaken in your heart one throb of affection for me, I'd consecrate myself to the work, and give myself no rest until I succeeded.

BER. Now you are doing just what uncle advised you not to do, talking about a detective's heart.

P. No, it's your heart I am talking about.

BER. Then you have no heart in it.

P. I would have if you would give me three words of encouragement.

BER. What three words?

P. I love you.

PARROT. "Rats! Rats!" (*Some one behind scenes to call out the parrot's words, in a very shrill voice. Both start, look round in surprise, then compose themselves.*)

BER. It's impossible to love one just because he does you a service. We love those on whom we bestow favors, not those who bestow favors on us. Now, if I were to save your life, establish your brother's innocence, or something of that sort, I might soon learn to love you.

P. I never thought of it in that light before.

BER. That is why the mother loves her child, though it does nothing for her, more than she does her parents who have done, and still may be doing so much for her. The weaker and more helpless the child, the stronger the affection.

P. Well, I concede you make a good point there. Just do me the favor—to love me.

BER. Then you're convinced that love is one thing, and gratitude for service is another.

P. Candidly, I never had a thought to the contrary. My hope has been that doing you a service might awaken a favorable interest that would make desirable a more intimate acquaintance that might lead to a stronger attachment—

BER. "That stood in the house that Jack built." (*Laughing.*) But seriously, if I should acknowledge that a favorable interest is already awakened—

P. (*Seizing her hand rapturously.*) You would make me the happiest man in the wide world.

BER. Then be the happiest man in the wide world.

PARROT. Give us a rest !

P. (*Springing up, angry.*) Where is the insulting rascal ?

PARROT. "Rascal ! Rascal !"

BER. *discovers the cage and laughingly holds it up to view.*
Enter JOHN, MRS. C., ESTHER and JED., the latter laughing loudly.

PARROT. "How are ye do ?"

JED. (*To P.*) Ye waren't in no disguise, so I didn't break my promise not ter give ye away. 'Low I'm privligned ter keep a parrot (*taking cage*) seein' I guv my note fer an interest in the bird business. Ter be kind ter birds is a great credit ter any one—

PARROT. In my position. (*Slow curtain.*)

PARROT. (*As curtain descends.*) "Pull down the blind !"

End of Act III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Miner's hut in the mountains. Practicable door and window at back. Three or four stools, a bunk or cot at back covered with a buffalo skin. Rude table near C. Two or three guns in corner. All in this scene dressed in miner's costume; blue or red flannel shirts, trousers in big boots; plenty of revolvers; long hair and heavy beards. Curtain rising discovers HERB. sitting at table writing.*

HERB. (*Stops writing.*) Eighteen wretched tedious months since the hum of the great city died out of my existence. One might as well be dead as to be an outcast from home and friends, and the ones he loves better than his own life. Dear little girl, I wonder if she longs to see me as I do to see her! I seem no nearer the goal of my hopes than I was a year ago;

but still hope is not quite dead. Hope, the blessed daystar of our existence, lifting us out of the slough, to-day, up to the summit gilded mount, to-morrow!

Go back I must not till wealth is mine; wealth, that mighty lever by which prison bars are broken like the frame of a miner's hut by the avalanche; the mighty lever of resistance by which even the slow march of so-called legal justice is impeded; too often completely stayed.

Yes, I must have wealth or the fickle goddess, Justice, will never come to my long waiting arms. Wealth, or die under an assumed name, a blot upon the fair name of Herbert Craincross. 'Tis humiliating, indeed, to feel that justice comes from the bottom of a long purse. (*Loud rap at door.*) Come (*picking up revolver from table.* ENTER D. C.).

D. C. 'Evening, sir. I've lost my way, an' also my pard, an' bein' the redskins are on the rampage over the range, I'd like ter stop here until light.

HERB. What might yer name be, an' whar d'ye hail from?

D. C. Dick Sargent's my name, but they call me "Crackey" 'cause I kin shoot some. My last hole was in Black Man's Gulch.

HERB. Set down an' rest yer bones. (*Lays down revolver.*)

D. C. What's yer name? (*Looking at him knowingly.*)

HERB. Bert Crosby, but they call me "Dickey," short for dictionary, as I tell them the meanin' of words.

D. C. Hadn't ye heerd 'bout the redskin scare?

HERB. Not a word.

D. C. They're playin' hob with the boys down the valley a few miles.

HERB. Why don't the boys go prospectin' for scalps? (*Rapping at door.*) Come. (*Enter PRENTISS as an Irishman, leading by arm JED. as an unfortunate, blind, deaf and dumb.*)

P. Good avenin', byes. Would ye be afther givin' two poor divils shilter fur thay noit?

HERB. Bet yer life, Pat. My latch-string is always out. (*P. seats JED. toward back near bunk and then sits at L.*)

D. C. Hills seem ter be full of tramps ter night. I jest now found shelter here, and my pard, Bill Bank, is out yit somewhar in the mountain.

P. Bill Bank! That's a foin name. Ef oi hed thet name oi'd turn it hind side afore, sthamp some big figgers on it, lave these blarsted diggins, go back ter the States an' live in luxury an' aze.

HERB. You and your pard don't seem to hev rolled in luxury much of late. What's the matter of him!

P. He's under a cloud, so to spake. Deef, bloind and spachless.

HERB. Terrible! How did he come to be in that condition?

P. Doan' know how he came to be deaf and spachless. He was thot way the fust toim he iver spoke ter me. Me an' him wuz a workin' in a hole one day an' his kane oi saw the dirt givin' away above me hid. He cot me by the ahum and jerked me outen the way, but his fut slipped an' he fell under the dirt himself an' when we got him out he wuz ez bloind ez the rock thet hed nearly crushed the loif oughten him.

D. C. Ye orter take good care of him.

P. Oi do. Oi protict him from all harrum uv all koinds.

HERB. Takin' him to the States to hev him treated?

P. Bliss yez sowl, oi'd hev him treated this blissed minnit ef oi hed a drap o the rale owld sthuff to trate him with. (D. C. *pulls out whisky flask and passes it to P.*)

P. Here's hopin' ye'll live to pick strawberries offen yer own grave. (*About to drink, stops and looks at the bottle.*) Is this thray min whisky?

HERB. What do you mean?

P. The koind thet nades thray min; one to take it, one to giv it, an' one to howld the one thet takes it. (JED. *oblivious, the others laugh.* P. *tastes the whisky and smacks his lips.*) Thet's the one man koind.

D. C. Yer pard hasn't been treated yit.

P. Didn't oi till yez oi protict him from harrum uv all koinds? If yez hed presinted me with a glass of limonade or aven a bottle of ager cure instid uv this pizen, wouldn't oi hev treated him illigently?

D. C. He'll feel hurt ef ye don't give him any.

P. One uv the blissins of misfortin. He wont suspect there's any tanglefut about ef oi kape it away from his nose an' mouth.

D. C. I say, Pat—

P. Dinnis ef yez please.

D. C. I say, Dinnis ef yez plaze, ye'd better give him a taste, seein' a taste is his main holt. (*P. steps up suddenly and thrusts bottle to JED'S mouth. JED. jerks back his head and makes a wry face.*)

P. (*Stepping back to extreme L.*) He doesn't loik it. (*Holds bottle in air as if about to drink again. D. C. suddenly draws revolver and shoots bottle.*) [NOTE. *Directions for performing this will be found in front.*]

P. (*Holding up neck of bottle.*) Whoop! Look a' thet now! Nick er nothin'. Who'd a tho't she was loaded! (*D. C. and HERB. laugh. Takes in the situation.*) Thot's rickliss. Yez shootin' iron might hev exploded and killed yez.

D. C. (*Getting up and extending hand to P.*) "Dinnis ef yez plaze," you're a brick; an out and out red brick, clear grit all through.

HERB. He's as gritty as—as—an Irishman.

P. Thanks, gentlemen. (*Picking pieces of glass out of sleeve.*) Ef thayre's onything in this wurruld thet ought ter be gritty, it's a brick shot full uv glass.

HERB. Mr. "Dinnis ef yez plaze," I'm quite interested in you. What's yer name?

P. Dinnis O'Shaughnessey.

HERB. Oh-shaw-no-say, that's too much. What's yer real name?

P. Thot's not a fayer quistion in the mines. Sposin' we

all hed ter give our ginooine names! The saints presarve us!

D. C. (*Looking sharply at HERB.*) That's wot's the matter; wot's the oldun's handle?

P. Down in Broadcloth Gulch he hed the hebit, afther his hurt, uv crawlin' roun' on his hands and knees diggin' up the groun' wid his fingers, an' as he seemed ter want the 'arth they called him Jay Gould.

HERB. Just like the boys. (*Shots heard at distance. All but JED. spring up.*)

D. C. Scalp lifters, by the eternal! (*Looks out of window at back. HERB. and P. get guns and revolvers ready.*) Man comin' down the gulch on a keen jump. He's chased, an' headin' this way. (*Shot heard at distance.*) There, he's down; now he's up agin. (*P. and HERB. hurrying.*)

P. Hope the owld man'll kape quiet.

HERB. (*To D. C.*) You stay at the window, and you, Dennis, stand at the door ready to keep them back, and I'll help the man in. (*Rushes out.*)

P. (*Admiringly.*) 'Thot chap don't fear the owld Nick himself. (*Takes aim and fires.*) 'Thar's one uv 'em thet'll niver git his fingers in me auburn locks. 'Thare's a foin chance fer some uv yez crack shootin', misther.

D. C. (*Firing.*) He seems hurt bad.

H. Blaze away at 'em an' oi'll help git the wounded man in. (*Exits. Business of getting the man in.*)

D. C. Is that you, Bill? (*Hurrying to him.*)

HARDIN. (*Faintly, holding hand to side.*) Yes, pard, I'm done for. (*They place him on the cot. D. C. kneels at side, HERB. and P. at door.*)

HERB. There's only a small band of 'em. I think they're pretty well used up.

P. So's the man in the bunk.

HERB. Let's slip out and reconnoiter. (*HERB. and P. exit.*)

D. C. (*Trying to stop the blood.*) Do ye know who helped ye in ?

HARDIN. No.

D. C. It's him, the young engraver wot we helped ter ruin.

HARDIN. (*Pointing toward JED.*) Not so loud.

D. C. Deaf, dumb an' blind.

HARDIN. Are ye sure it's the one ye think ?

D. C. Course, knew him the minute I set my peepers on him.

HARDIN. I must see him before I pass in my checks.

D. C. Don't talk about passin' in yer checks. Ye're good fer fifty year yet.

HARDIN. (*Groans.*) I tell you I must see him.

D. C. He's gone ter drive the Injins off.

HARDIN. I'll die before he gets back. (*Takes out a paper. Speaks with great difficulty.*) There's a written confession. I made it out so as to fix the blame of that scrape where it belongs. All it needs is my signature. For heaven sake let me sign it. I'll make a little amends to him. He tried to save my life by risking his own. I'll give him my claim.

D. C. Shoot the confession. Keep mum an' ye'll be all right in a few days.

HARDIN. Oh, God, do you refuse a dying man's last request. Just to protect yourself ! And get a rich claim !

D. C. (*Turning away from cot.*) Curse the paper. I'll tear the infernal telltale thing to bits. (*JED. springs up, snatches paper, throws D. C. to floor and disarms him, gives paper, pen and ink to HARDIN, holding D. C. on floor with knee.*)

JED. Don't wiggle or I'll flatten yer out. Laws, I 'low I ain't been deaf an' blind all these months fer nothin'. (*HARDIN writes.*) Do you solemnly swear thet this is the truth ?

HARDIN. I swear it. (*ENTER HERB. and P. Astonished at the situation.*)

P. Huzza ! 'The rids are riddled. (*Recognitions.*)

JED. An' the riddle is solved. (*Releases D. C. who exits, hastily.*) Here's a confession. (*Looking it over.*) It proves yer innercence, my lad. (*Shakes hands with HERB. HERB. goes to bunk.*)

HARDIN. Forgive me; I've tried to make amends. Oh, if I had my life to live over again! (*Gasps. HERB. lifts his head and shoulders upon his arm.*)

HERB. I forgive you.

HARDIN *reaches out his hand to JED. who takes it. Kneels near cot. HARDIN mutters incoherently, gasps and sinks back dead. P. stands near with handkerchief to his eyes. JED. and HERB. still kneel beside the cot. Slow curtain.*

End of Scene 1.

SCENE 2. *Same as ACT 1. A well furnished parlor may be used instead. Characters all well dressed. ESTHER and MR. WINDUM seated, when curtain rises.*

W. (*Twirling moustache.*) And are you still undecided, Miss Goldfair?

ESTHER. Undecided? Concerning what?

W. How can you be so cruel as to ask, when you know that my love for you is my all absorbing theme of thought.

ESTHER. Oh, pardon my abstraction.

W. May I ask the occasion of it?

ESTHER. The occasion is the occurrences of a year and a half ago.

W. And what occurred then?

ESTHER. Have you forgotten? Of course it did not make the same impression upon you that it did upon me. Herbert escaped at that time.

W. Haven't you given him up yet?

ESTHER. By no means.

W. Listen to reason, Miss Goldfair. Herbert Craincross is an outcast from society, a fugitive from justice; and should his innocence ever be established from a legal point of view,

his name has suffered an ineffaceable blot. At best he can offer you but an unenviable place in society. He will always be an underling. Besides, he cannot care much for you or you would long ago have heard from him.

ESTHER. I shouldn't be obliged to publish it in the papers if I had.

W. I offer you wealth, a refined home, a position in society, the opportunity to go abroad, and to enjoy life in those diversified ways afforded only by wealth and leisure. Only say you will be mine.

ESTHER. Would you wish to have a wife who each day when the bells ring out the hour of twelve, as well as at many other times, sends up a prayer for another man's safety and happiness? (ENTER JED. *at back*.)

W. You would soon forget that when you had promised to be another's.

JED. (*Coming down*.) Thar's whar yer way off, old hoss. (*Shaking hands with ESTHER*.) When these gals gits thar minds fixed on a feller they stick ter him like a sickish dude ter a cigarette. Hed heaps o' chances ter notice thet in my position, Justice of the Peace.

W. (*Rising angrily*.) I'm not inclined to submit without protest to being called an "old hoss."

JED. All right, young hoss, I kin prove my thery. Keep yer eye peeled, young hoss, an' notice wot ye observe an' remember wot ye recollect. (*Calling off*.) Come in, friends. (ENTER HERB. and PRENTISS *at back* and BERNICE *at R*. ESTHER *springs up with a cry of joy and rushes into HERBERT'S arms*. *Business of handshaking and salutations*. ENTER JOHN and MRS. C. *More of the same*.)

JED. (*To W. who has been standing with folded arms at extreme L*.) Wot yer think now, young hoss, about stickin' tight?

W. (*To ESTHER sarcastically*.) I'll not intrude longer upon this happy reunion.

JED. Oh yes ye will, young hoss, we can't excuse ye jest yet, nowhow. Got some interestin' readin' fer ye ter hear. Pard, fire off the bomb thet'll knock the spots offen a cantankerous hypercrit.

PRENTISS. (*Taking out paper.*) I am about to read the last will and testament of Alexander Hardin.

(*Reads.*) The undersigned, though a "crook," has never but once allowed himself to be the tool of a designing villain.

The burglarizing of the store of Windum & Tick was done by Windum himself. He drugged the engraver and did the deed. (*W. starts toward the door, but JED. prevents his going.*)

JED. (*Presenting revolver.*) "Don't ye go, Windum, don't go." We shoot first an' explain arterward up in the mountings. Read on, pard.

P. (*Reading.*) Windum paid me a thousand dollars to put some of the plunder in the young man's room, also the paper with the signatures. The same genteel rogue brought the revolvers to the station to help us out.

JOHN. Horribly hinfamous.

P. (*Reads.*) Windum is a first-class fraud. He and all like him are way below a squaretoed highwayman who doesn't profess to be anything but a rascal.

P. S.—I hereby give my entire and exclusive right in Silver Summit Lead to Herbert Craincross.

ALEXANDER HARDIN.

W. (*With the greatest confidence.*) Now look here, people. Use your reason to determine whether or not this is at all probable. Isn't my word as good as that of a desperado who no doubt did the deed and now seeks to lay the blame upon me? That is too barefaced for belief by sensible people.

JED. Them are the words of a dyin' man, a man now dead. He couldn't hev no motive in hidin' the truth.

BER. We have other testimony concerning the matter. Our old servant, Sally, is prepared to take oath that she knew of the presence of Hardin in the house when he left Mr.

Windum's decoy here, but was terrified into silence by a threat that her life should pay the penalty if she should divulge the knowledge. All this I learned from her only to-day.

JED. Brayvo! Our young detective is comin' out strong!

BER. There's something else, uncle. Your note has come to light through the same channel. (*Holding up the note. All gather around except W., who sidles up to door and exits unobserved.*)

JED. Gewhittaker crickets!

BER. The cabman who drove Miss Bobbin to the train picked it up and after several days gave it to his cousin, our old servant. That was too late for her to give it to you, and she laid it aside. Her insanity coming on, she could tell nothing about it until she became rational, which was very recently.

JED. Laws! Wonder the cabman give it up. Who ever knowed before of a cabman givin' up anythin' of promise.

BER. The cabman didn't think it worth much, as he saw Miss Bobbin take it from her bag, look at it, and throw it on the floor of the cab.

JED. Yer don't say so! They's a lot of foolishness about thet cantankerous critter, anyhow. I 'low the Poseyville Bank ud snap arter thet bit o' paper like a king bird arter a honey bee. (*Takes paper.*)

BER. Come, now, uncle, I'd hate to offer you a hundred dollars for it myself.

JED. Yer jokin'!

BER. Read the signature.

JED. (*Holding it off from eyes to read.*) Jedediah Jackson. (*Bursts into a loud laugh, in which others join.*)

MRS. C. Doesn't that beat everything!

JOHN. She beat 'erself.

HERB. Didn't give you time to finish your little signature, eh, uncle? Well, just be a trifle careful in future. As one of the principal stockholders in the Silver Summit Lead, your name to the business end of a large I. O. U. will make it valuable.

JOHN. Hif signed in hits hentirety.

JED. I'll cash this in its entirety for charitable purposes, and our young detective, Miss Bernice, shall be commissioned ter dispense it as her kind heart dictates. But whar's our high-flyer? (*Looking around.*)

JOHN. 'E seems to av habsquatulated.

JED. Wall, it's all right, as thar's a blue coat with a big Irishman in it at the door, an' a patrol wagon ter give him a free ride ter the station. We didn't come onprepared.

JOHN. An' av you hall struck hit rich hup there?

JED. We hev an' no mistake. Every cloud hes its silver linin' an' we've found the linin' ter this one.

P. (*Coming down with BER.*) And I have been doubly blessed in my good fortune. One of the proprietors of "Silver Summit" and a lasting interest in a mine of pure gold. (*Looking proudly at BER.*)

JED. But not a *controllin'* interest.

HERB. (*Coming forward with ESTHER.*) I think *I* have the interest in the mine of pure gold. Miss Goldfair. (*As if introducing her.*)

JED. I 'low your cloud seems ter hev a *gold* linin'. Wall, it gladdens my eyes ter see young folks parin' off fer matrimony. Lor, it's nateral an' it's right, an' *it orter be encouraged by every one in my position.*

Curtain.

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